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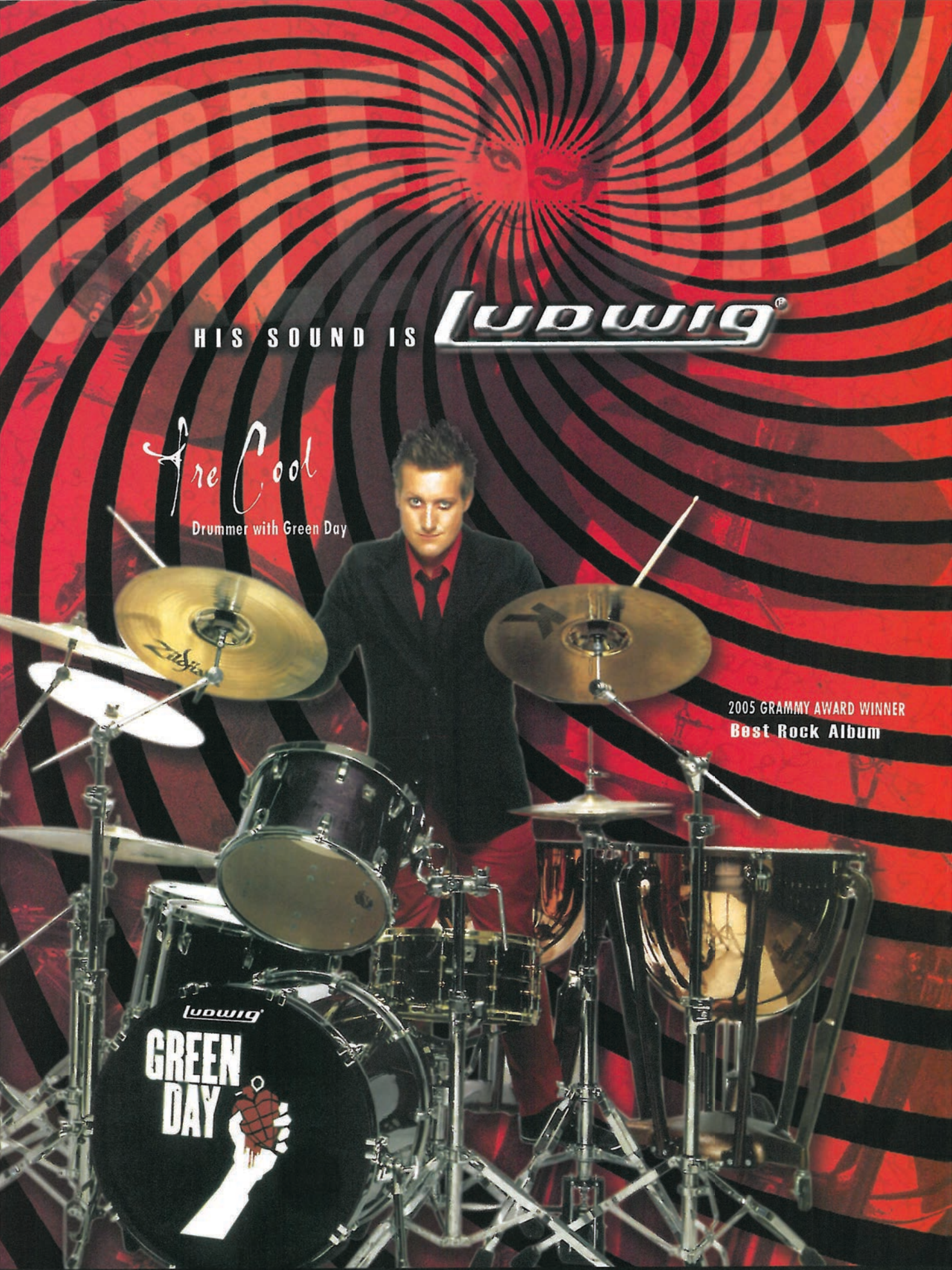


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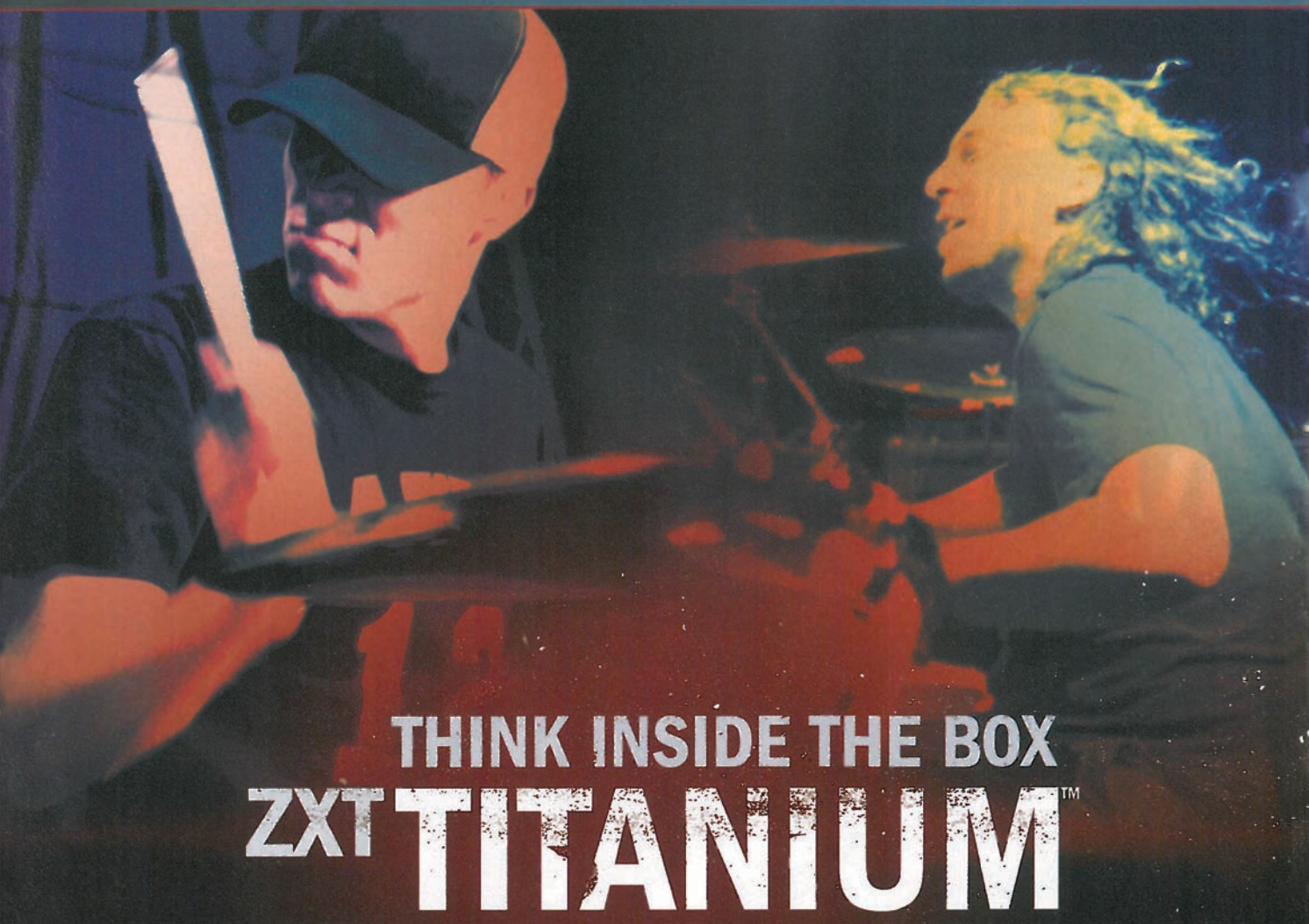

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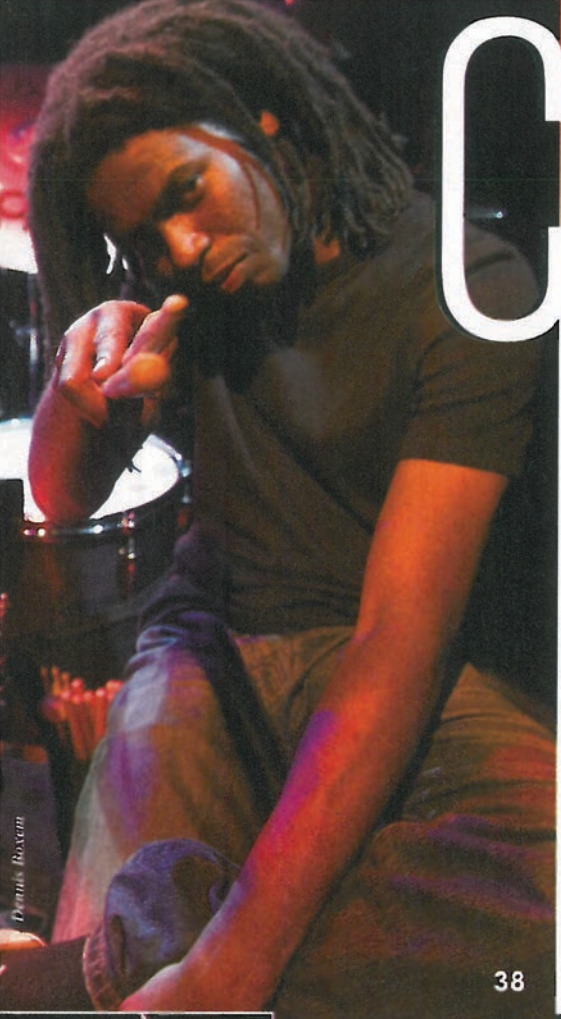


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# Enjoy Every Step

"I love to practice"..."I hate sitting in a room by myself"..."I wish I had more time"..."I don't practice; I only play with other musicians." If you talk to a number of drummers, you'll likely hear these and several *other* opinions about practicing. To many, it's a very enjoyable pursuit, whereas to others, it's drudgery.

Over the twenty-plus years I've worked at *MD*, I've been fortunate enough to get to know some of the true greats of the instrument. What has struck me about almost all of them was their discipline and intense determination to improve. These artists never seem to tire of practice and have put in the huge amounts of time necessary to become masters of the craft. (This month's cover artist, Rodney Holmes, certainly fits this description.)

Early on in my development, I spent several hours a day practicing—I couldn't get enough of it. The problem for me as I've "aged" has been staying inspired. While I've gone through stretches where I couldn't wait to get to the drums, I have to admit that there have been times when I've lost focus, fallen into a rut, and not wanted to even *look* at the drums.

An odd thing I've noticed about myself—and something that might be true of you—is that the busier I am, the more I practice and the more focused my practice time is. As anyone here at *MD* will tell you, our work schedule is loaded. In addition to that, my wife and I recently became parents for the first time. And I've also had a ton of gigs lately. (Yes, we editors still get out and play.) But even with all of this going on—or maybe *because* of it—I'm more motivated than ever to practice.

Why all of this talk about practicing? On page 106 of this month's issue we present a solid article on the subject by drummer Brad Taylor. (Reading it got me thinking about my practice habits.) In the article Taylor offers several practical tips for getting the most out of your practice time. I hope you check it out.

As for staying motivated, all I can say is, do whatever you can. The "standard remedies" still work: Check out new music, go hear a live band, attend a drum clinic, or take a drum lesson. Better yet, buy a new piece of gear! (That always seems to work for me.)

Finally, one of the best pieces of advice I ever received on practice and the process of improving on the instrument came from one of my teachers, who said, "Think of drumming as a journey, not a destination. Try to enjoy every step." Maybe that's the secret to the whole thing.

Bill Miller

MODERN DRUMMER

Volume 29 Number 12

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**MODERN DRUMMER** magazine (**ISSN** 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2005 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

**EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: MODERN DRUMMER Publications**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: (973) 239-4140. Fax: (973) 239-7139. Email: mdinfo@moderndrummer.com.

**MODERN DRUMMER** welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** US, Canada, and Mexico $34.97 per year; $56.97, two years. Other international $49.97 per year, $99.97, two years. Single copies $4.99.

**SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE:** Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Call (800) 551-3786 or (815) 734-1170.

**MUSIC DEALERS:** Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer Retail Vision, 2 Maple Street, Suite 6, Middlebury, VT 05753, (800) 381-1288.

**REPRINTS:** Reprints of Modern Drummer articles can be supplied on request. Contact Tracy Kearns at MD for details: (973) 239-4140.

**INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE:** Robert Abramson & Associates, Inc., Libby Abramson, President, PO Box 740346, Boyton Beach, FL 33474-0346, abramson@prodigy.net.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

**MEMBER:** National Association Of Music Merchants, American Music Conference, Percussive Arts Society, Music Educators National Conference, Percussion Marketing Council, Music Magazine Publishers Association

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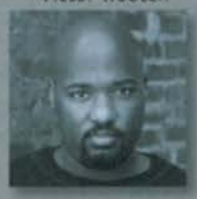


Chad Butler
"Switchfoot"

JJ Johnson
"John Mayer"

Jeremy Colson
"Steve Vai"

## Teddy Campbell

It's been years since a drummer made a major impression on his peers as the result of playing on a TV show. We've all heard the stories of Ringo's drum world–changing appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Buddy Rich's guest spots on *The Tonight Show*, and Steve Jordan's breakout stand with the original *Saturday Night Live* band. A few years back, there was Vinnie Colaiuta on the short-lived *Late Show With Joan Rivers*.

Now we can add Teddy Campbell to the list of impression-makers. His work on *American Idol* had me (and a lot of my drummer friends) asking, "Who *is* that guy?" Thanks, *MD*, for answering our question with such an insightful interview.

**Phil Eston**

## Will Denton

Thanks for the excellent article on Will Denton. I've known of Will for quite a few years, and it's great to see *MD* covering this dynamic drummer. John M. Aldridge did a fine job of asking questions that inspired interesting answers.

If you've never seen Will play live, check him out with Steven Curtis Chapman. He puts all he has into his playing, and he plays with a deep groove and a clever articulation of his parts. And his drums sound great.

**Sal D'Amato**

As a long-time reader, I'm writing to let you know how great it is to see Will Denton get some props. Although I don't know Will personally, living here in Music City and working with another Christian music act has made me aware of his reputation and his many accomplishments. The positive message and outstanding attitude conveyed by Will in his interview will go a long way in helping to encourage, motivate, and reinforce positive and productive attitudes for drummers of all ages and skill levels.

The last paragraph of Mr. Denton's article should be on the wall of every drummer's rehearsal area as a reminder that, when all is said and done, it's not how good our chops are, it's how good *we* are to the people we play for and interact with. Thanks again for a super article.

**Todd Mortl**
Fox Brothers Band
Nashville

## Inside The WFD

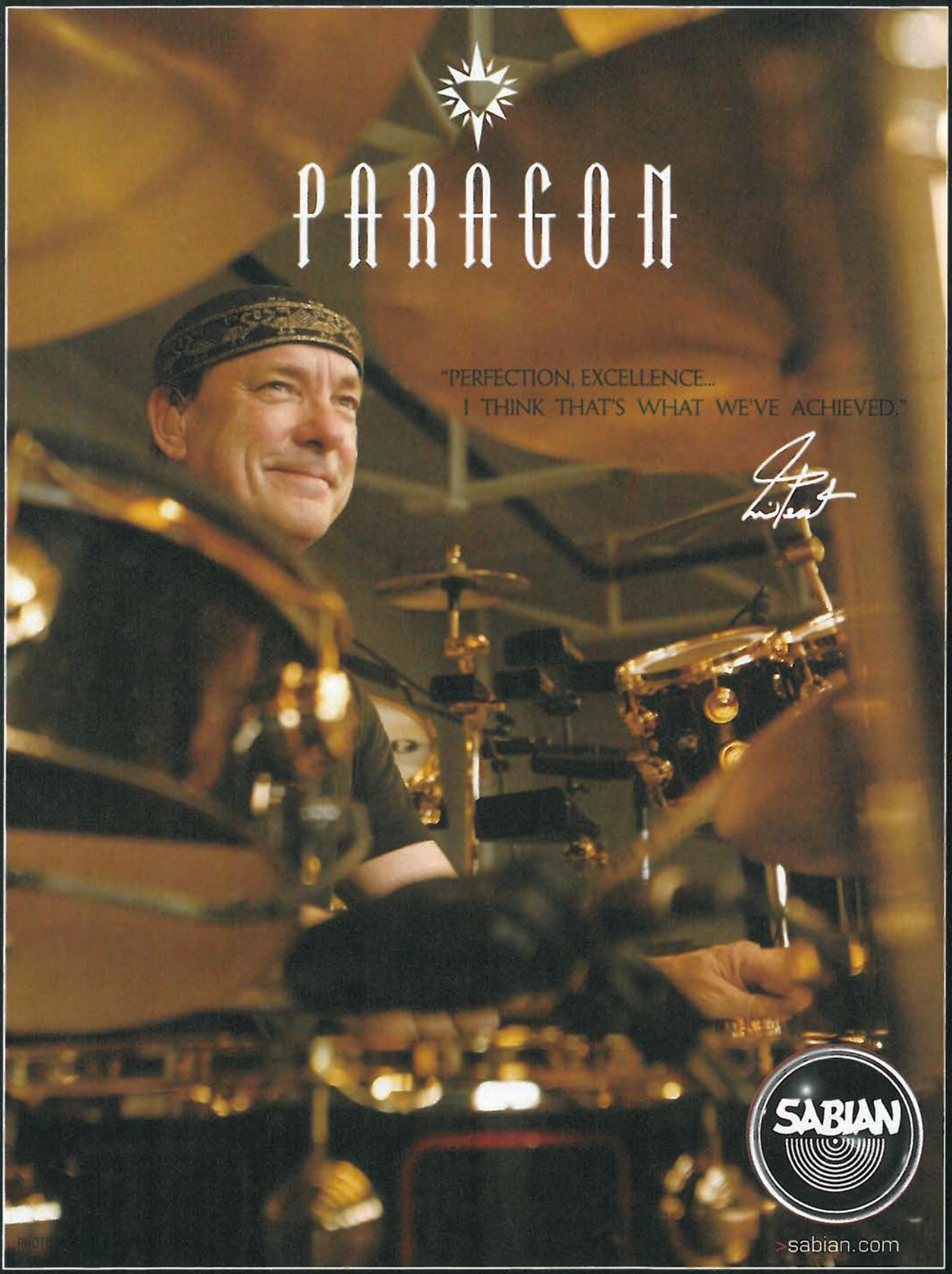
I enjoyed reading about the WFD in the September issue. I've gotten to know some of the WFD guys, and not only are they nice people, they also talk about effective technique, innovative movements, and goal-setting. And they really enjoy what they do.

It was particularly great to see Art Verdi in the story. Although Art is probably best known for his association with the WFD, he has also played with many notable musicians, including Jack Wilkins (Buddy Rich Band), Sal Salvador (Stan Kenton), Phil Woods (Benny Goodman), and Stanley Turrentine (Max Roach, Ray Charles). He has also sat in with Joe Morello's band on several occasions. In fact, Art and I saw Morello a few months ago at a performance, and Joe announced to the crowd that Art was present. How's *that* for recognition?

**Dan Britt**

## Liberty's Emotions

The "Emotions And Your Drumming" article by Liberty DeVitto was absolutely amazing. I've been playing for twenty-three of my thirty-three years, and although I haven't achieved the status that Liberty has, I can sure appreciate every word in his article. In fact, that article sums up my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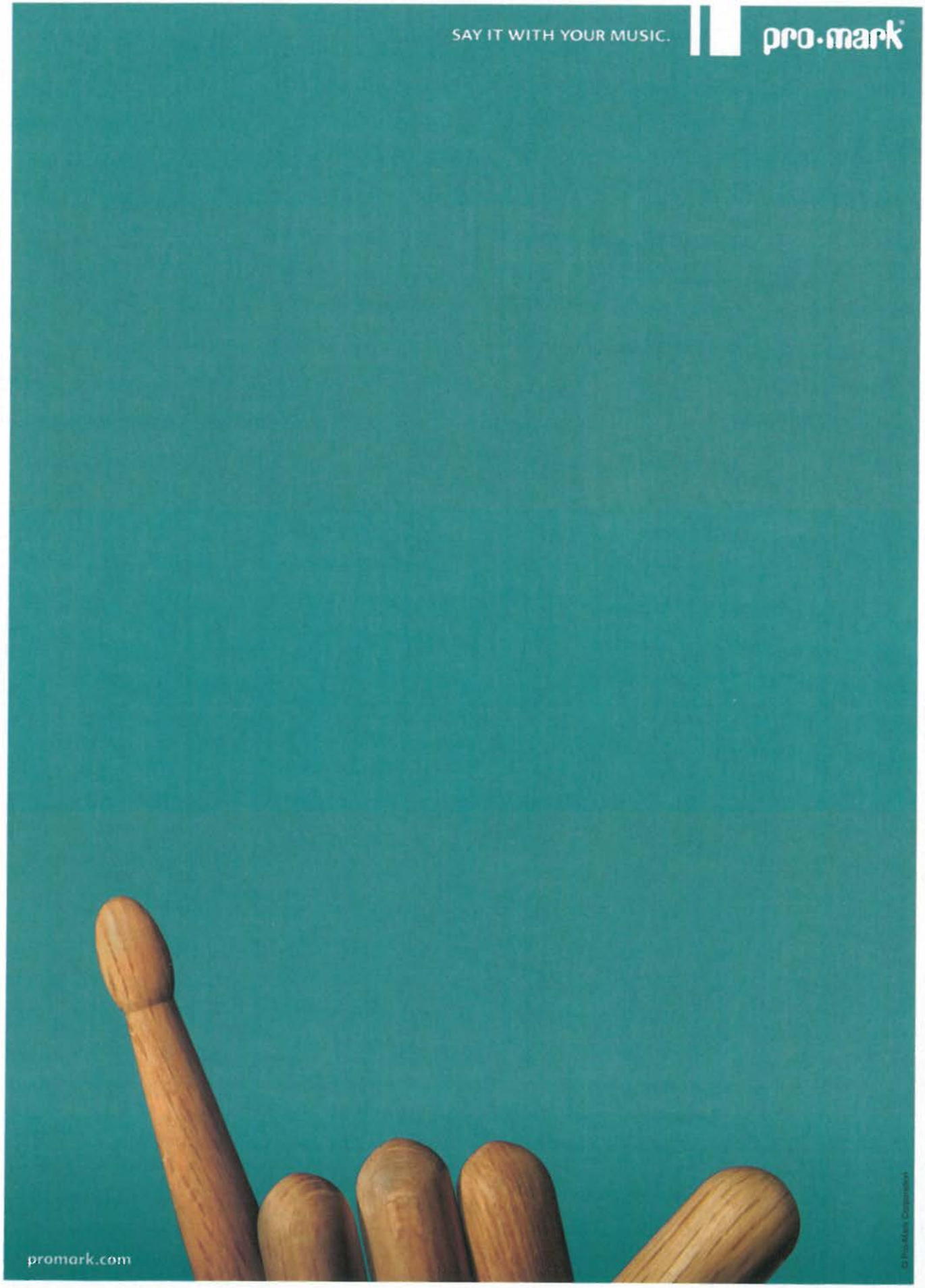

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existence. I immediately handed the magazine to my wife and said, "Honey, this says it all."

I would also like to tell Liberty that he's not the only one to ever sleep next to a drumset. Thanks for such a beautiful and well-written article. **Ken McCray**

## DG And The Tough Stuff

I want to thank you for the return of David Garibaldi as a regular contributor to *Modern Drummer*. I find his exercises to be challenging and rewarding. They're hard to play at first, but once I get grooving on them I'm able to explore new territory. The stuff in the September issue is a particular blast. I'm also enjoying Ari Hoenig's material.

Don't be reluctant to include more advanced or difficult practice-room material every month. The educational portions of your magazine are light years ahead of your competition. **Phil Neighbors**

## Another Aspect Of Hoops

I just read the "Die-Cast Vs. 2.3-mm Hoops" item in the September *It's Questionable* department. I've explained the same subject to my students over the years, and I'd like to add another aspect: tendinitis. I've found that for harder and more frequent players, there's more of a tendency to develop tendinitis in the wrist and forearm when playing on die-cast hoops. The reason for this, I believe, is that there isn't the "give" in the hoop under rimshots like there is in 2.3-mm hoops. For players like myself who usually play all backbeats as rimshots, this is a problem. In exchange for the health of my wrists and arms, I sacrifice the tuning consistency and rigidity of die-cast hoops. I usually suggest using die-cast hoops for toms, but 2.3-mm for snare drums. And of course, one should always do a nice, slow warm-up prior to playing. **Dan Garvin**

## How To Reach Us

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## One Drummer's Loss

I'm sure you've seen the devastation that hurricane Katrina caused in the Gulf Coast region. My house in Slidell, Louisiana was flooded with six feet of water and left with two feet of mud. We saved only what we

took when we evacuated the night before: pictures, clothes, and my drums (the essentials!). We took photos of the damage the next day. When I saw this one, I knew I had to send it to you.

A lot of musicians in the area have lost everything. New Orleans and the Gulf Coast were always alive with the most diverse and beautiful music. The area was a very fertile ground on which I played music, taught drum lessons, and did a lot of studio work. Now it is silent. This is truly a sad time—the end of life as we knew it in the Big Easy and Gulf Coast. Let's pray for rejuvenation. **Rory Faciane**

*Editor's note:* MD *sends its sympathy to everyone whose lives were impacted by Katrina. We encourage our readers to contribute to ongoing recovery efforts. The percussion industry is organizing various campaigns to that end. Watch for announcements in future* MD *issues.*

## The Wrong Sweet

In the August '05 *Different View*, producer Michael Wagener talks about recording Stryper's *Soldiers Under Command* album, and mentions that the drummer was Michael Sweet. Michael is a guitarist. His younger brother Robert is the drummer. By the way, Stryper is back together and doing some touring. **Jim Petipas**

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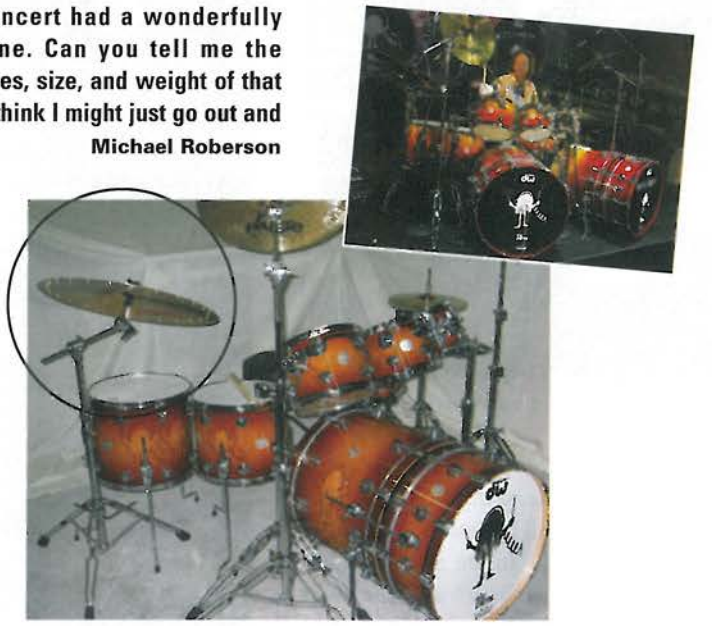
## Nigel Olssen's Riveted Ride

**My wife and I attended an Elton John show in Oklahoma City earlier this year. I've always been a fan of Nigel Olssen's drumming and sound. The cymbal positioned over his floor toms at that concert had a wonderfully glassy tone. Can you tell me the brand, series, size, and weight of that cymbal? I think I might just go out and buy one!** **Michael Roberson**

According to Paiste's Andrew Shreve, the cymbal you're referring to is a 24" 2002 ride, fitted with about twenty rivets. It's clearly visible in the photos shown here.



## How To Use Minimal Miking

**I have at my disposal a Mackie 1604 VLZ Pro mixing board, three Shure SM58 mics, one Shure SM57, one Marshall MXL990, and one Marshall MXL991. Can you recommend optimal placement of any or all these mic's on my kit in order to record some drum tracks? I play a Tama Starclassic tuned for a light jazz/folk/whatever sound, and I also have some percussion mounted at various points around the kit. Any assistance you can lend will be greatly appreciated.** **Mike**

Since your main drum mic's are Shure models, we checked with Ryan Smith, who is Shure's regional/artist relations manager in Nashville. Here's his response.

"With three 58s and one 57, I'd suggest using a 58 in the kick, the 57 on the snare, and then play around with placement of the other two 58s on the toms or as overheads. You could use the two Marshall condensers as alternative overheads, or possibly on the hi-hat.

"With any mic's and instruments, experimenting with placement will yield the most favorable results. For example, if you want more attack from the kick, put the mic' closer to the beater. For more 'roundness,' put it farther away."

**QUESTIONS FOR MD'S DRUM EXPERTS?**

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

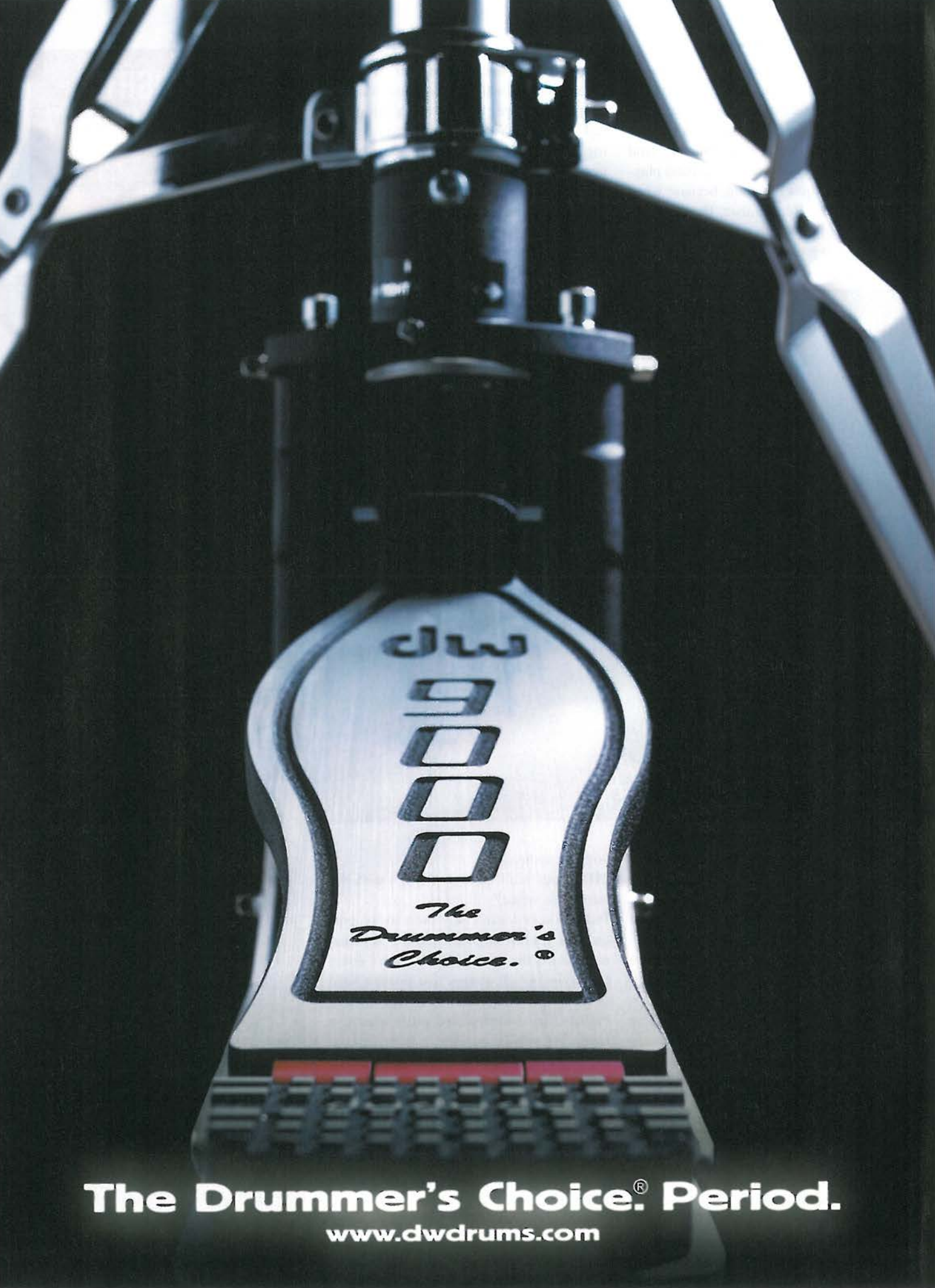
## Curing Noisy Lugs

**I have my father's vintage Slingerland set from the mid-1960s. I love this kit to death and it sounds gorgeous. Unfortunately, I have recently noticed that the bass drum makes a metallic rattle in the overtones. Upon inspection I discovered that the springs in the die-cast lugs are causing the sounds. I figured they were rusted or broken, but when I took one of the lugs off the drum, the spring was in perfect condition.**

**The sound can't be heard in live situations, but it would make it impossible to record the drums. Is there any way to stop this rattle without tampering too much with the original hardware.** **John Wagner**

The springs you describe were put into the lugs to hold the swivel nuts (which receive the tension rods) in place. The noise you're hearing is the result of those springs vibrating in response to the drum sound (or sometimes to the sounds of other instruments). This noise was such a common problem in the late '60s and the '70s that the springs were designed out of most lugs by the early '80s.

Fortunately, your problem has a very simple and effective solution. Remove the lugs from the drum, pack each one with cotton balls around the spring, and re-attach them. From that point on, you should hear only silence.

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# Polyrhythm Tips From Bill Stewart

**Q** I admire you very much, as do many other drummers here in Brazil. I would like to know how you play polyrhythmic figures around the drums so freely and so beautifully. And what do you think is the best way to practice playing polyrhythms? **Ricardo Teixeira**

**A** Thanks for listening, and for your compliments. Any time I come across a polyrhythm that is challenging, I try to understand exactly where the rhythms fall in relation to each other. That usually means slowing the tempo down to a much slower rate than I might intend to play the polyrhythms. At a slow tempo, any inaccuracies will be more obvious. In fact, I find that polyrhythms are often more difficult to play slowly at first. As you master polyrhythms, learning new combinations should become a bit easier.

Once you master the rhythms of each limb, you should also work on independently controlling accents and dynamic balance between parts of the set. You can use your creativity to apply what you learn in many combinations around the drumkit. There are also some books that might be helpful, including *Rhythmic Analysis* by Fred Albright. It features a chart that clearly explains many of the basic combinations. It then goes on to apply these combinations in etudes.

Good luck in all your musical endeavors.

# Antonio Sanchez's Ride Cymbal Work

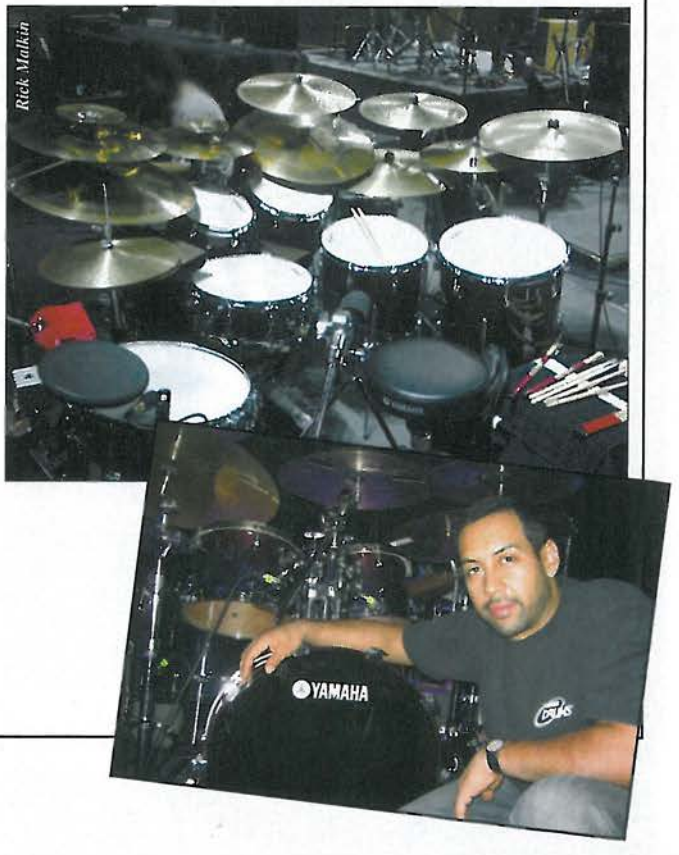
**Q** I've just purchased the Pat Metheny DVD *Speaking Of Now: Live*. What a phenomenal performance—especially your awesome solo work. You guys consistently raise the bar for musicianship.

Does Pat dictate consistently riding the cymbals throughout the show? I'm not so sure about Danny Gottlieb, but your immediate predecessor, Paul Wertico, had a huge cymbal setup, and he stayed on the ride cymbals too. In fact, I don't remember him (or you) ever riding the hi-hat. **Jesse R. McGlown Jr.**

**A** Thanks for the kind words. They mean a lot to me. The concept of most of Pat's music is definitely based on the ride cymbals, which is why you don't see me riding the hi-hats at all. Pat really likes to solo over a "bed" of consistent ride playing. And he also wants the music to flow nicely, just like bebop. Even though it doesn't sound like it, a lot of the music we do is definitely based on the bebop language. So that's one more reason for the approach you're asking about.

The main reason for the number of cymbals I use is that Pat's music is very complex, and each tune has a lot of sections. *The Way Up* is a non-stop, 68-minute composition, so you can imagine how many sections that one has! The different cymbals provide me with a wide palette of sounds to make the music go where it needs to go dynamically and emotionally.

Thanks for listening. And look for the new PMG DVD that should come out next year: *The Way Up Live In Seoul*.



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# Simon Phillips On Developing Speed

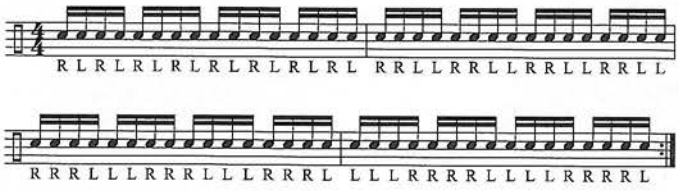
**Q** I've seen you several times on different videos. One collection in particular that has amazed me is *Burning For Buddy*. You were astonishing on that recording—and *very* fast. So my question is: What would be some good exercises to develop faster hands along with control?

**Joshua Reynolds**

**A** Ahh...the eternal question! I wish there was a magic solution to this problem, but there just doesn't seem to be any way other than good old-fashioned practice. However, *what* and *how* you practice is critical. There are many different approaches, and things can even come down to how you hold your sticks. But let's tackle one approach.

First, don't worry so much about speed. At this stage the faster you try to play, the tenser you will get. That tension affects everything in your playing. I practice the method of *control*: playing precisely at slow speeds and different dynamic levels. Make sure that each stroke is even between the left and right hand. You shouldn't be able to tell which hand is playing. Concentrate on lifting the sticks off the drumhead, and on making the drum sing. If you play on a practice pad, you will hear the difference of the tone of each stick. Make sure your grip is relaxed but in control.

You can play through any rudiments you like, but make sure you play them with feeling and in time. One exercise that I find most helpful is to play 16th notes, with one bar each of single, double, triple, and quadruple strokes. Make sure to start the quadruple strokes on the last 16th note of bar 3. The last 16th note of the quadruples will fall on the second-to-last 16th note of the fourth bar. Add one more 16th note, and you're back to the beginning of the phrase.




This is a tough little exercise, but it will help all of the above. Work up to speed slowly, and remember that practicing at low volume levels is good for control, too. Hope that helps!

## Repeat Bar

### A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"You have to realize that while complexity is cool, the melody is imperative. And you *always* support the melody." Touring and studio great **Abe Laboriel Jr.**, January 2003

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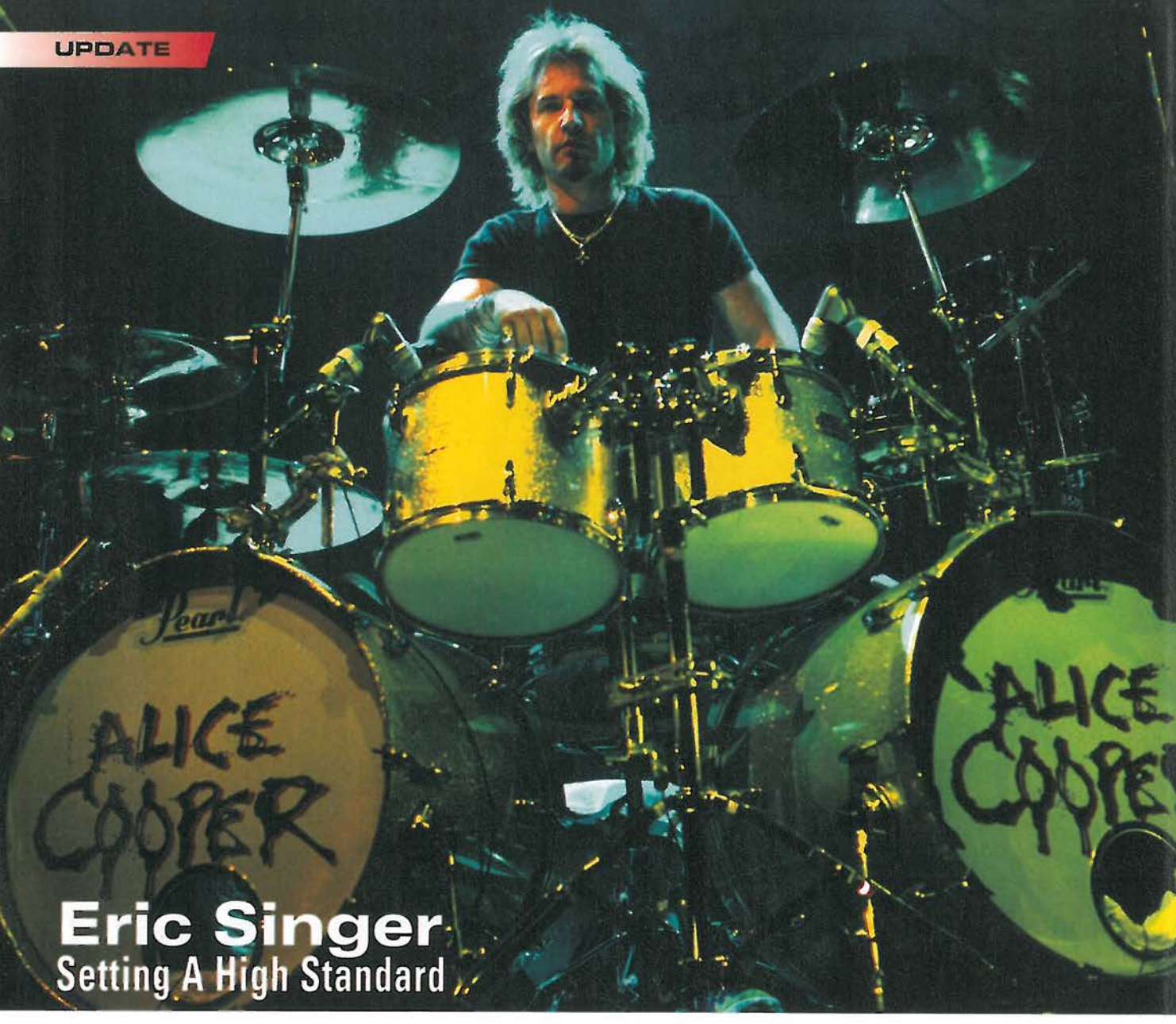



# Eric Singer
## Setting A High Standard

"Realizing that this industry is a business and not about friends was probably the hardest thing to swallow," says drumming great Eric Singer. "Any time a band says there's musical or personality differences, it's usually about money."

Eric Singer has been around the block. Since 1984 he's played and toured with the likes of Lita Ford, Gary Moore, Black Sabbath, Brian May, KISS, and many others, and he's currently on tour with Alice Cooper. "The impression is that I'm a mercenary and that I play anything for money," he says. "Truthfully, being a pro musician can be an emotional roller coaster. It's a very inconsistent lifestyle for the most part. Very few people make consistent, real money doing this."

With so many experiences and different gigs under his belt, it's no wonder Singer never stays unemployed for long. "I come in and give bands what they want," he says. "I've always brought professionalism to the show. It's not always about just playing the beats. It's about the day-to-day preparations and surviving the road so you can get up and play consistently. It's about being a quick study, and being on time and professional. Bringing a good vibe is important, too."

Certainly one of Singer's most bittersweet moments was when he was asked to don the makeup of Peter Criss for the past few KISS tours. "I had mixed feelings," he explains. "But it's what I do for a living. It's a good drumming gig on a high level. It's a gig with all the amenities and a nice paycheck. I thought, 'This is my living, and if I don't do it, someone else will.'"

From a technical perspective, Singer explains, "I didn't have to emulate Peter's style verbatim. I had to cop the *feel* of what he does. To me, it's really about trying to play for the song and play for the band. As I've gotten older I've become more impressed with bands and not individuals. U2 and Cheap Trick are perfect examples of musicians who don't play as virtuosos but collectively lay it out."

Still, it seems like most drummers would shriek at the thought of playing "Rock And Roll All Nite" at every show. "Yeah, it is basic," Singer admits. "But from a feel point of view it's actually kind of difficult. It's a '50s, real tight 8th-note hi-hat feel. Technically it's not difficult, but stylistically it's challenging.

"There are a lot of people who can technically play everything I've done," Singer adds. "But could they get along with Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley?"

**Steven Douglas Losey**

## Mamma Mia's

# Ray Marchica

## In The Ring

Ray Marchica is the quintessential hustling freelancer, out there every day trying to make a living as a drummer in New York City. "It's really A to Z what I do—Abba to Zappa," says the New York native. "And everything in between."

For the past year and a half, Marchica has been the regular full-time drummer for the Broadway production of *Mamma Mia*, based on the music of the mega-successful '70s pop group Abba. He also holds down the drumming chair in Ed Palermo's big band, which plays ambitious arrangements of Frank Zappa's music every Wednesday night at the Iridium nightclub in Manhattan.

Somehow, the busy husband and father of two also finds time to play in Mike Longo's New York State Of The Art bebop big band, while occasionally performing with the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra *and* continuing to cut a jingle per month as a session drummer. Throw in performances with the BMI Composers Orchestra, Jim Cifelli's funky Groove Station band, and the occasional gig supporting cabaret singers, and you've got the makings of one of the hardest-working drummers in town.

"Yeah, I'm constantly switching hats," says Marchica, who for six years played alongside guitar great Rodney Jones in the house band for *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*. "I get calls all the time for different things, and I always try to do them. This is what I do to make a living, and it's fulfilling my dream. When I was in high school I didn't just want to play one style of music, so I really feel blessed to be doing what I'm doing and making a living at it as well."

This year, the ubiquitous sideman has also been able to step out and represent his jazzy side on *In The Ring*, a swinging quartet session for the Sons Of Sound label that features guitarist Rodney Jones, bassist Lonnie Plaxico, and tenor saxophonist Teodross Avery. While he may be confined to very strict duty in *Mamma Mia* (where he plays to a click track on a nightly basis), Marchica was able to stretch in spontaneous, interactive fashion on *In The Ring*, which has him playing in the liberated tradition of jazz drumming heroes like Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Philly Joe Jones, and Joe Morello.

For more info, go to www.raymarchica.com.

**Bill Milkowski**

# Franklin Vanderbilt Jr.

## Hot Prospect

## With Stevie And Chaka

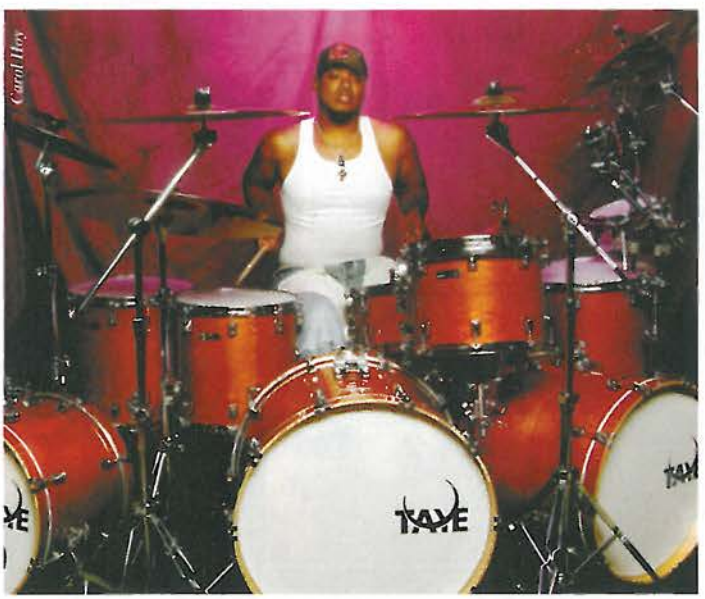
Royal Prince Franklin Vanderbilt Jr. (yes, "Royal Prince" was the first name given to him by his grandmother, who decided royalty would be his destiny) recently worked with Stevie Wonder—after holding the drum seat with Chaka Khan for two and a half years. No question, he is a hot young prospect.

"Stevie needs groove and a drummer who is alert," Vanderbilt says. "It's been an honor to play with Stevie and Chaka. Both are drummers, so they know exactly what they want, and they don't compromise. Chaka needed a heavy foot from me, and a strong pocket."

In between Chaka tours, Vanderbilt also toured with famed jazz bassist Stanley Clarke. "Working with Stanley really helped me grow musically," the Chicago-born drummer says. "I got bigger ears playing with him. There was also a lot of improvisation, which I enjoyed a lot."

Vanderbilt teaches at a performing arts center by the name of A Place Called Home, a program dedicated to the inner-city youth of Los Angeles. He's also currently working on his own project, which will focus on his passion for rock. "Even though the music is different, all music must groove," says Vanderbilt. "But what makes it different is how and where I apply my energy. Not to say that rock music is not dynamic, because it is. But when I'm playing rock, I have a tendency to drive harder. The difference between my playing rock and playing with Chaka and Stevie is in approach and touch. With Stevie, I would usually play right on the beat, or slightly behind it, depending on the song. In rock, I really get pretty emotional."

**Robyn Flans**



# Jason Boesel

"It's a damn impossible way of life," says Band guitarist Robbie Robertson of the road in the film *The Last Waltz*. Looks like Rilo Kiley drummer Jason Boesel didn't get the memo. "I guess I've been on tour pretty consistently since the beginning of January," says a surprisingly chipper Boesel before a mid-summer Rilo Kiley show in Sheffield, England. "I'm still hanging in there."

Boesel and his LA-based band have been on the road since the August 2004 release of their third album, *More Adventurous*, a record that lives up to its title by featuring a plethora of musical styles ranging from indie rock to country to waltzes.

"I think we naturally gravitate towards new ideas," says Boesel of Kiley's musical eclecticism. A key ingredient to *More Adventurous*'s varied sound is Boesel's wide use of percussive instruments such as glockenspiel, timpani, hand bells, and congas. "I was in school bands from seventh grade through high school and into college," says Boesel. "I was a music major for three years, and I definitely like to draw from that experience."

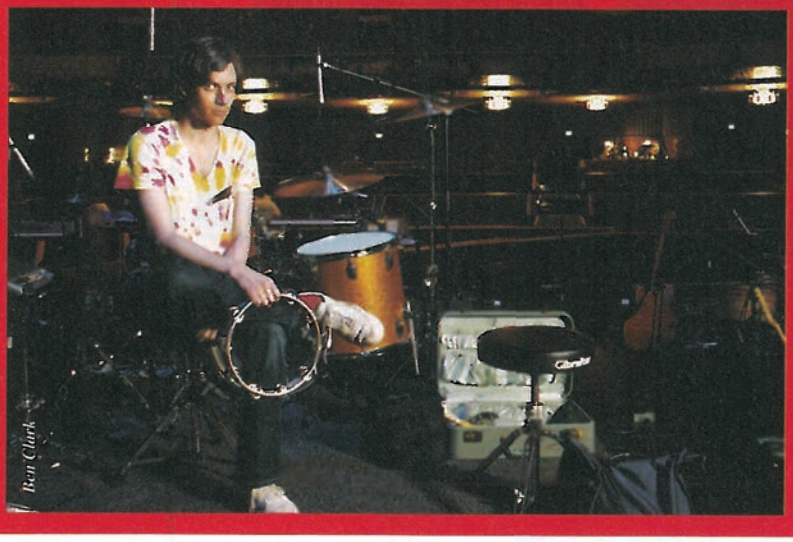
Lately, Boesel's been lending his talents to another of indie rock's marquee names: Bright Eyes. Boesel met Bright Eyes creative force Conner Oberst while on tour in 2001, and the two have played together off and on ever since, most recently on Bright Eyes' acclaimed 2005 albums *Digital Ash In A Digital Urn* and *It's Morning, I'm Wide Awake*.

"It's actually not that difficult," says Boesel of the logistics of playing with two successful, globetrotting bands. "Basically I do all of the Rilo Kiley stuff and if any Bright Eyes things happen to fall in between, I do them. But Kiley takes the front seat."

Boesel's plans for the immediate future? Yup, more touring. The early fall of 2005 saw Rilo Kiley opening a month's worth of dates on Coldplay's US tour followed by headlining trips to Australia and Japan. "Oh," says Boesel, seemingly remembering some small detail that's slipped his mind. "And I might go out with Bright Eyes for six weeks in October."

Wonder if Boesel's roommates remember what he looks like? **Jon Wurster**

## Road Adventures With Rilo Kiley

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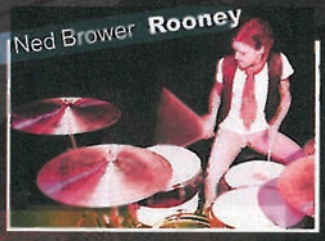
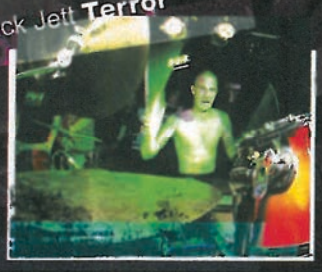
Idris Muhammed **Jazz Great**

Ned Brower **Rooney**



Patrick Hallahan **My Morning Jacket**

Nick Jett **Terror**



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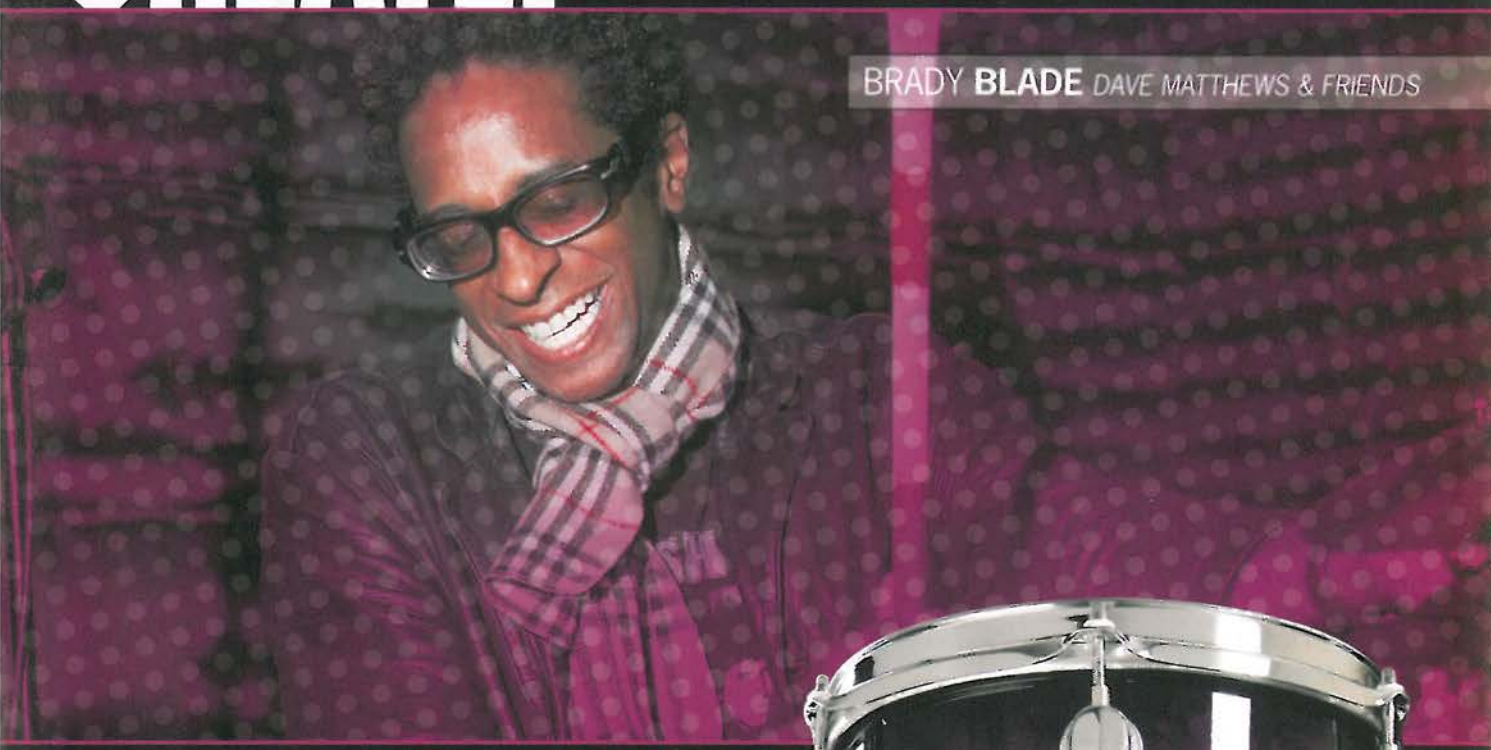

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## Rise Against's
# Brandon Barnes Punk Meets Technique

Barry Brecheisen

Spin Rise Against's latest album, *Siren Song For The Counter Culture*, and you'll instantly hear punk drumming that's as versatile as it is powerful and consistent. From the carefully paced intro of "Blood To Bleed," to the rapid kicks of "Anywhere But Here," you quickly get the idea that drummer Brandon Barnes *really* has his game nailed down. Though he's originally from Colorado, Barnes joined Rise Against after a successful audition, began work in Chicago on the band's debut, *The Unraveling*, and ended up making the Windy City his new home.

Barnes credits drummers like John Bonham, Bill Stevenson, and even Elvin Jones and Tony Williams as inspiration. "I definitely think I have kind of a swing to the way I play. It's not on purpose, it's just because when I took lessons as a kid I studied jazz with my teacher."

Barnes got the opportunity to work with Stevenson during the sessions for 2003's *Revolutions Per Minute*. "Bill told me to simplify a little bit and hit harder," Barnes admits. "He tried to help me find fills that actually work loudly enough to cut through the heavy guitars."

After a successful run on 2003's Warped Tour, Rise Against signed with Geffen and was back in the studio, working on *Siren Song* with producer GGGarth Richardson (Rage Against The Machine, Mudvayne). Barnes says that the challenge of the studio is "to stay consistent and not get burned out or tired after you play drums for eight hours a day." The drummer also uses a click track to keep his speed in check. "That's a challenge too, being able to ride with the click and not make it feel too square or unnatural."

As for ideas on building speed, the impressive kind that Barnes has, he suggests the time-tested method of playing rudiments. "Go buy your basic book of rudiments. That's how I got my hand speed up. When I'm home and not on tour, I definitely try to get on a pad every day and play for at least a half-hour to keep my hands in shape. If you don't do it, the first week of a tour, your hands are just trashed."

**Waleed Rashidi**

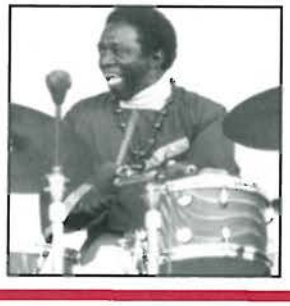
# DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

**Billy Gladstone** was born on 12/15/1892, **Warren "Baby" Dodds** on 12/24/1898, **Tony Williams** on 12/12/45, **Cozy Powell** on 12/29/47, and **Dennis Wilson** on 12/4/44. Dennis passed away on 12/28/83, original Byrds drummer **Michael Clarke** on 12/19/93, and jazz great **Don Lamond** on 12/23/03.

On 12/17/47, Charlie Parker records *Crazeology* with Miles Davis and **Max Roach**.

On 12/12/95, The Beatles (with **Ringo Starr**) reunite with the help of the late John Lennon's demo vocal to record "Free As A Bird."

On 12/12-13/56, **Art Blakey** records his classic album *Hard Bop*.



## Happy Birthday!

**Ed Thigpen** (brush master): 12/28/30

**Dave Clark** (The Dave Clark Five): 12/15/42

**Allan Schwartzberg** (session great): 12/28/42

**Alex Acuña** (LA percussion great): 12/12/44

**Bobby Colomby** (Blood Sweat & Tears): 12/20/44

**John Densmore** (The Doors): 12/1/45

**Clive Bunker** (Jethro Tull): 12/12/46

**Carmine Appice** (rock great): 12/15/46

**Peter Criss** (KISS): 12/20/45

**Jim Bonfanti** (The Raspberries): 12/17/48

**Lenny White** (fusion master): 12/19/49

**Richie Morales** (Spyro Gyra, Mike Stern): 12/8/52

**Buddy Williams** (*SNL*/sessions): 12/17/52

**John "JR" Robinson** (studio great): 12/29/54

**Sheila E** (solo artist): 12/12/57

**Sonny Emory** (Earth, Wind & Fire): 12/27/62

**Lars Ulrich** (Metallica): 12/26/63

**Marco Minnemann** (Illegal Aliens): 12/24/70

**Tré Cool** (Green Day): 12/9/72

**Jeremy Hummel** (ex–Breaking Benjamin): 12/8/73

**Samantha Maloney** (Hole, Mötley Crüe): 12/14/75

**Ned Brower** (Rooney): 12/15/77

MD Radio **To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.**

# NEWS

**Shannon Larkin** and Godsmack are back in the studio, working on their new CD.

**Jay Schellen** has joined Asia. The band is working on a new record, and tour dates are pending. For more info go to www.asiaworld.org.

**Russ Miller** recently completed a clinic tour in Scandinavia to sold-out crowds.

**Sonny Emory** recently released a solo CD, *Love's Pure Light.*

**Gerry Brown** did some clinics in Scandinavia while touring with Diana Ross in Europe.

**Bobby Blotzer** is on tour with Ratt.

**Vincent Jackson** is on the new release by Greyhounds, *Liberty.* The record was produced by Galactic's Stanton Moore and Robert Mercurio. For more info, go to www.greyhoundsmusic.com.

**Tommy Aldridge** has been on tour with Whitesnake.

**Russ Kunkel** is on tour with Lyle Lovett.

**Gantt Kees** has been touring with Ray Stephens.

**Oscar Seaton** is currently alternating between gigs with Lionel Richie and George Benson. He is also working on a rock project called 13 Curves.

This past summer, while on a short break from Billy Idol, **Brian Tichy** filled in for Velvet Revolver's **Matt Sorum** on a week of shows when Matt broke his finger water skiing. **Mark Schulman** completed the tour when Brian went back to Billy Idol.

**Evan Stone** is now touring with Aly & A.J.

**Zachary Alford** is filling the drum chair in Gwen Stefani's band.

**Terri Lyne Carrington** will be doing a residence at the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

**Matt Cameron** has been on tour with Pearl Jam, including opening some shows for The Rolling Stones.

**Dave Chavarri** is on tour with Ill Nino.

**Steve Gadd** has been on tour with James Taylor.

**Marvin Hammett** is on tour with Backstreet Boys.

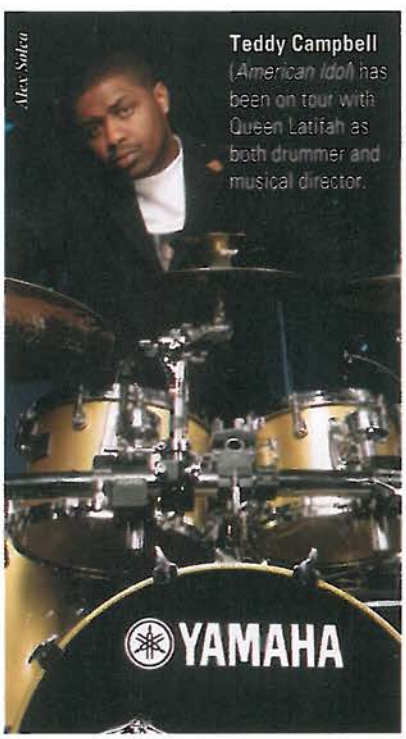
**Kevin Packard** (ddrum's division manager) has a new CD with Checkpoint Charley, *Songs One Through Twelve.* For more info check out www.checkpointcharley.net.

**Alicia Warrington** is no longer with Kelly Osbourne. She is now a member of the band Lillix. For more info check out her site, www.aliciawarrington.com.

**Felix "D-Kat" Pollard** has been touring with Clay Aiken.

**Ed Roscetti** recently did World Beat Rhythms clinic tours in New York and California. His new book, *Rock Drumming Workbook* (Hal Leonard), has just been released. Ed has also been in the studio writing, tracking, and producing a variety of projects. For more information check out www.worldbeatrhythms.com.

Congratulations to **Sean Paddock** (Kenny Chesney) and his wife, Theo, on the birth of their baby girl, Julia.




**Teddy Campbell** (*American Idol*) has been on tour with Queen Latifah as both drummer and musical director.

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# Tama Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune Drumkit

## Classic Beauty...Bright Ideas

*by Mike Haid*

**KEY NOTES**

- beautiful bubinga finish with distinctive abalone inlay
- innovative tuning system
- exceptional low end from bass drum
- large drum sizes may limit technique and tom positioning

In order to understand what makes a drumset an expensive, high-end item, you need to understand the quality and cost of the materials, the manufacturing process, and the product development that went into the creation of such a valuable purchase. So if you think you're ready to step up to a high-end kit, you should first invest the time necessary to educate yourself about what makes such a kit worth its price tag.

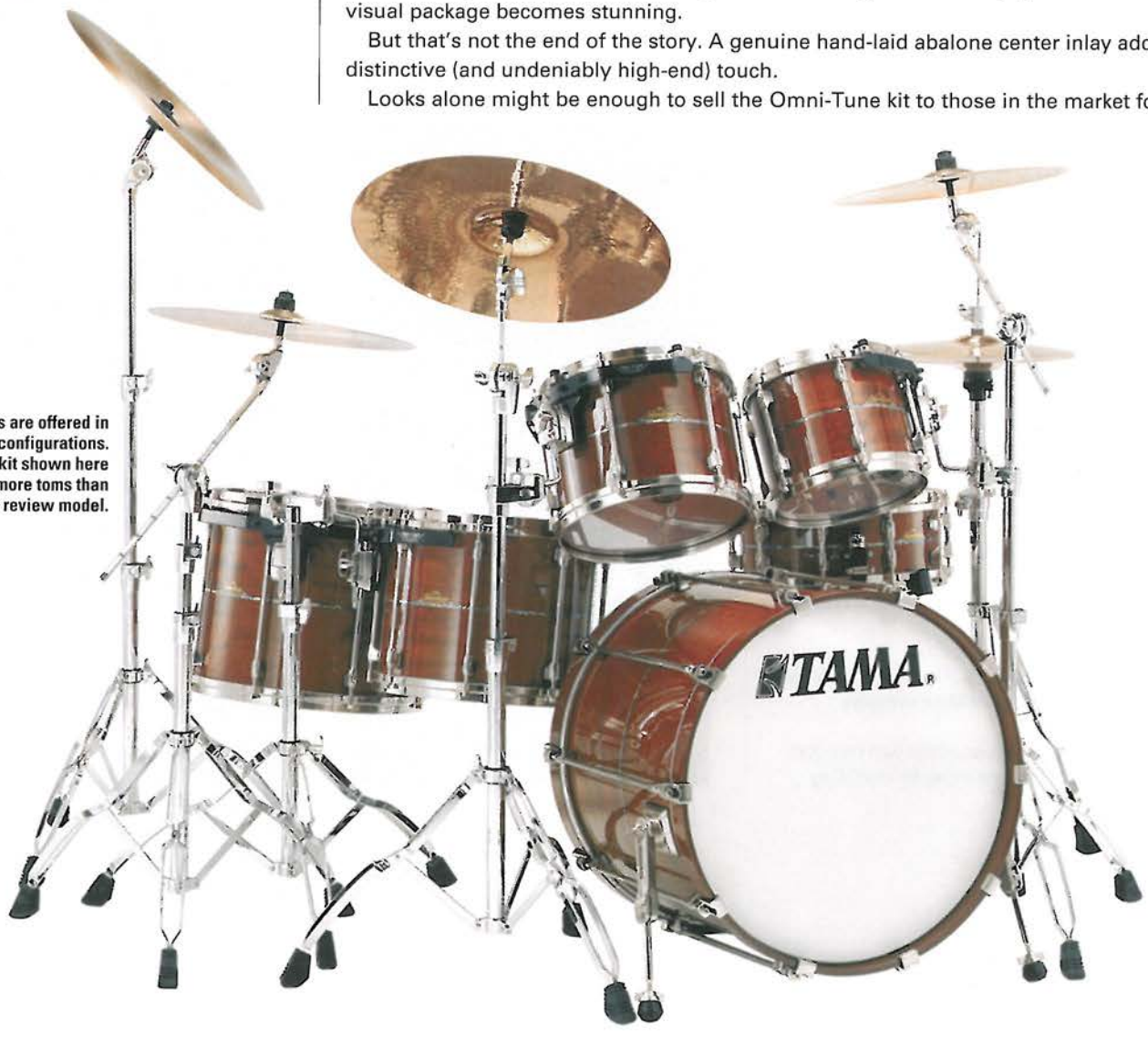
Let me save you some time and trouble. The Tama Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune drumkit offers all of the elements that define the term "high-end."

### Classic Looks

The vintage appearance of the high-gloss, pecan-brown, 100% African bubinga wood used to create the kit's 9-ply shells is one of timeless elegance. Add to that the retro-looking brushed-nickel tube lugs with matching die-cast hoops, and the overall visual package becomes stunning.

But that's not the end of the story. A genuine hand-laid abalone center inlay adds a distinctive (and undeniably high-end) touch.

Looks alone might be enough to sell the Omni-Tune kit to those in the market for a




**Omni-Tune kits are offered in a variety of configurations. The six-piece kit shown here features two more toms than our review model.**

classy, high-end drumset. But let's go deeper, into the revolutionary advancements in lug and tension-rod design that Tama has made for tuning this kit.

### The Omni-Tune System

Every so often, a company develops—or at least reintroduces—an idea that seems obvious and logical, but for some reason was shelved or just didn't catch on when previously introduced.

Way back in 1930, drummer and inventor Billy Gladstone created a lug system that allowed for tuning of both the top and bottom heads from the top of the drum. Gladstone drums were produced in limited quantities, and they now enjoy great popularity among collectors.

Tama introduced their own version of Gladstone's system on snare drums about ten years ago. That design had some problems, and the drums were discontinued shortly thereafter. The company has since refined and improved the concept to create the new Omni-Tune lug design, and it works *very* well.

The design requires a special key (provided with each drum) that has a hex head on one end and a regular square head on the other end. To tighten the bottom head from the top of the drum, you turn one of two interlocking tension bolts counterclockwise, using the square-head key. To tighten the top head, you simply turn the other tension bolt clockwise with the hex-head key. This procedure can be a little confusing at first. But once you get the hang of it, you'll wonder how you could ever go back to conventional tuning from the top and bottom.

The downside of this system comes when you have to change a drumhead. Having to deal with two interlocking bolts is frustrating when changing heads, especially on the bass drum. Still, once you get the system figured out, it's more than worth the aggravation. With the Omni-Tune system, I was able to fine-tune every drum in our four-piece review kit more accurately than I've ever tuned a kit before. It's especially nice not to have to walk around the kit a dozen times to get just the right tension on the front bass drum head. (And if you simply can't get used to this new technology, you can still tune the bottom head from the bottom on each drum, in the old-fashioned way.)

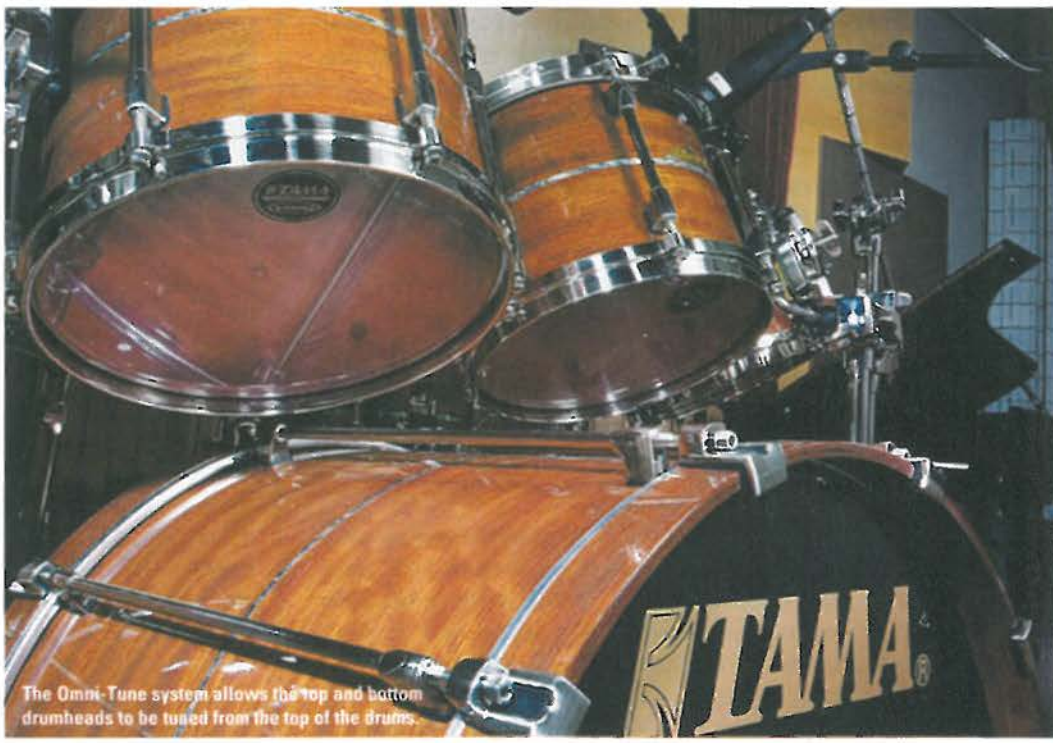
As far as I'm concerned, the Omni-Tune system alone makes this kit worthy of "high-end" status. Whether it catches on enough to be incorporated into other drumkit designs remains to be seen.

### A Closer Look

Now that we've covered the appearance and the unique tuning system of the Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune, let's go one-on-one with each piece of our beautiful review kit. It consisted of a 10x13 suspended tom, a 16x16 floor tom, an 18x24 bass drum, and a $5^1/_2$x14 snare drum. The supplied hardware included an HTC77WN combination stand and a HS700W snare stand.

### Toms

The 6-lug, 10x13 rack tom features the Tama Star-Cast suspension mounting system, which allows the drum to resonate freely. The suspension bar is connected to the drum via three rubber-coated mounting screws that pass through dedicated holes in the die-cast hoop (separate from the six tension-rod holes). The Star-Cast mount attaches to the HTC77WN Roadpro combination stand from a fixed ball-joint arm built into the post, just above the base of the stand. A second post holds a cymbal boom arm that can also slip down inside the post to become a straight cymbal stand. This stand permits versatile and convenient tom and cymbal placement, all from one stand.



The Omni-Tune system allows the top and bottom drumheads to be tuned from the top of the drums.

The eight-lug, 16x16 floor tom features sturdy legs with beefy, rubber feet and a solid, grooved memory lock system that easily fits into place and doesn't budge. The rack tom features the same memory lock on its mount.

Both toms had flawless bearing edges and a smooth inner ply surface. They come equipped with Evans G2 clear batter heads and G1 clear bottom heads, and the tone they produced was deep and punchy. They had more high-end attack than a maple shell, with as much punch and quick initial decay as a birch shell—which was surprising, given the density of bubinga. There is also plenty of low-end resonance to these toms, allowing them to be tuned down as deep as you want to go.

### Bass Drum

The ten-lug, 18x24 bass drum had a thunderous low end—deeper than I've ever heard from any 24" bass drum. It could easily pass for a 26" drum in the studio.

The drum came fitted with an Evans EQ4 clear batter head and a coated front logo head. It had too much power and low end for most small to mid-sized venue gigs when played wide open, so I put a small pillow inside, barely touching each head. This was just enough muffling to help focus the sound and define the attack in order to achieve what I would consider to be the perfect big bass drum sound.

### Snare Drum

The $5^1/_2$x14 snare drum is held by the HS700W Roadpro snare stand. The stand is solid, highly functional, and easy to operate, with a large plastic handle to tighten the basket around the drum and a sturdy ball joint arm to allow for pin-point positioning.

The bubinga snare came equipped with an Evans G1 coated batter head and an Evans Resonant 300 snare-side head. The die-cast hoops increased the drum's already bright tone, while dual snare adjustments allowed for precision tensioning of the snares. To my ear, this drum sounded best when tuned up high. It had a focused tone when played in the center, with little over-ring and no annoying snare buzz.

I couldn't get quite enough beef out of the snare drum when I tuned it down. (It's possible that a different head combination might help that situation.) But the articulation and defined "crack" in the upper register was outstanding.

### Overall

I had only one frustration with this acoustically and visually beautiful kit. I'm accustomed to playing a kit with a 22" bass drum and standard-depth rack toms. Owing to the larger bass drum and deeper rack tom shell on our review kit, I couldn't position the rack tom low enough to play in a comfortable position without having its bottom hoop resting on the shell of the bass drum. I had to adjust my playing technique to accommodate the kit. Fortunately, the Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune series is a complete line, so sizes are available for players who would be more comfortable on smaller drums.

In closing, I feel that the cost of this high-end kit is justified by its overall quality, its innovative tuning system, its timeless beauty, and more details that strive for perfection than even meet the eye. If an expensive, vintage look and a big, powerful sound is what you're after, I suggest you give the Starclassic Bubinga Omni-Tune kit serious consideration.

**THE NUMBERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| $5^1/_2$x14 snare drum | $690.99 |
| 10x13 rack tom | $900 |
| 16x16 floor tom | $1,150 |
| 18x24 bass drum | $1,990 |
| HTC77WN Roadpro combination stand | $169.99 |
| HS700W Roadpro snare stand | $129.99 |

(215) 638-8670, www.tama.com.

# Quick Looks

## S-Hoops

The S-Hoop is a new drum hoop designed by drummer/inventor Rick Barrickman. The 2.3-mm hoop features a triple flange...with a twist. Instead of turning out like standard hoops, the top edge of the S-Hoop angles in and down towards the drumhead. The combination of these angles is said to make the hoop more rigid—almost like a die-cast hoop—which provides greater tuning consistency. In addition, the point at which the stick makes contact for rimshots and rim clicks is smoother, making things easier on your sticks and hands.

When I first looked at the S-Hoops, I thought that they sat down closer to the head than a standard hoop. This would naturally cause problems with rim clicks, tuning, and rimshots. But that turned out to be an illusion caused by the way the inner edge angles down toward the head. The height of the hoop where the stick actually makes contact is very similar to that of a standard hoop. The inside lip of the hoop is also handy for securing a muffling ring. The ring slips under the lip, and you don't have to worry about catching it with a stick or having it fall off.

The inner bevel of the S-Hoop also protects the bearing edge of the drum. While this might not be a concern for most players, there's always the chance that a beginner might hit a very off-center shot. But I think that the greatest advantage in terms of bearing-edge protection is for players who stack up their kits for travel or storage. I've never been comfortable with the thought of a drum supporting several others while the rim from the drum above it puts all the weight on its bearing edge.

The S-Hoops did act similarly to die-cast hoops when it came to tuning. One lug could be loosened slightly with little or no effect on those around it. The S-Hoops also seemed to give each drum a more vibrant voice, with greater depth. Utilizing them on the bottom heads as well would only heighten that effect. Rim clicks felt fine, and I found that I could really lay into rimshots. They sounded the same as shots played on standard hoops, but I didn't feel the shock through my hands that I normally would. And from a purely aesthetic point of view, the inward angles of the hoops gave each drum a clean and compact look.

Prices for chrome-finished hoops range from $48.99 to $50.99 for 8" to 16" models; other sizes can be ordered. They're being sold through Big Bang Distribution. Check them out, they may be a turn for the better.

**Big Bang Distribution, (800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com; SafeHoop Company, (502) 550-2904, www.safehoop.com.**

***Chap Ostrander***

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# EXPRESSION

# Meinl Mb20 Cymbals

## Loud, Nasty, And Aggressive!

*by Will Romano*

**KEY NOTES**

- brilliant finish and acoustic clarity
- lots of character and complexity
- cut-through power
- too aggressive for general-purpose use

Meinl's Mb20 line offers hefty, aggressive cymbals developed to meet the demands of today's heavy rock drummers. Meinl sent us one of every size and model, including one China, two pairs of hi-hats, two splashes, three rides, and five crashes of varying sizes. Ordinarily I might ask: How would these cymbals behave? But given their target market, the more appropriate question is: How would these cymbals *mis*behave? Lock up the children, it's going to be one headbanging ride.

### A Little Background

The Mb20 series cymbals are composed of B20 bronze alloy (80% copper and 20% tin). All of the cymbals are hand-hammered and are subjected to a rigorous lathing process in Meinl's Turkish production facility. Cymbals are hand-tested for look and sound. Once they pass inspection, they're sandblasted, polished, and lacquered, giving them a brilliant finish.

Visual and acoustic encounters with other B20 cymbal lines had me believing that all bronze cymbals were created equal. I would be *rudely* awakened.

### Mix 'N' Match

Meinl states that the cymbals in the Mb20 series are "harmonically matched" to let drummers mix and match them in a variety of combinations, without experiencing "disturbing harmonies." I found this to be true. Different size combinations of rides, hi-hats, and crashes produced an uncanny uniformity. While some sizes and models *did* work best with certain others, to my ears all of the cymbals were active in similar melodic zones, making them virtually interchangeable.

### Crash Tests

I started my testing process with the 20" heavy crash. When I struck it, I heard a loud splash, then a "kerplunk," followed by a barrage of hissing sound ripples that faded after several seconds. There was also a nice range of high and low over-

tones. I believe that the cymbal's vibrant performance was made possible by its incredibly brilliant finish. With its sustain and body, this cymbal was *made* to compete with amps whose volume knobs are stuck at 11.

The only drawback (if it is indeed a drawback) is that the 20" heavy crash was *too* vibrant. Even when choked, it just wouldn't *shut up*. (One hand couldn't quiet it, and two were barely enough.) I had to keep reminding myself that most jazzers or world music drummers would not, and *should* not realistically attempt to use these cymbals as part of their normal setup. Simply put, if you're searching for a cymbal with a traditional dry "crack" and a relatively short decay, the Mb20 line is not the place to look.

The 19" heavy crash was slightly brighter than the 20", with a shorter decay and a comparatively limited spread. Though it reminded me somewhat of thin, dark cymbals I've played in the past, as with the 20" it was nearly impossible to stop from ringing, even when choked by hand. The dimpled, hand-hammered surface and the shining finish produced exquisite colors that bounced around the room and shimmered endlessly in the air. The sound was so rich and thick with multi-pitched overtones that I was taken back to the time when I heard my first crash cymbal. The bark, the bite, the wonder of it all....

The 18" heavy crash was, in a word, "unforgiving." Its ear-stinging performance literally made me wince. The crash was so loud, in fact, that it seemed to drown out the ride and hi-hat I was playing. That effect was intensified by its seemingly endless decay. I can't imagine using this cymbal night after night without my hearing being affected. Truth be told, my ears were still ringing after one jam session in which I used the 18" and the 19" together. Their pervasive, sympathetic, and harmonious ringing shot straight through my skull like metal spikes.

At times the focused ringing accumulated into a sonic wash worthy of any heavy metal band. It was obvious that these cymbals are designed for drummers who look for that constant cymbal "fuzz." Subtlety simply doesn't enter into the equation.

The 17" heavy crash achieved the best balance of sound clarity, complexity, and volume of all the crashes we tested. It performed admirably alongside amplified instruments. When coupled with the 14" or 15" hats and the 20" heavy ride, this crash completed a great-sounding set that could have musical applications beyond heavy rock. In other words, the 17" cymbal played nicely with others (and no one got hurt).

The only crash in this batch I would dub "semi-bright" was the 16" heavy crash. It was definitely the softest on my ears (although that ain't sayin' much in this group). This little monster worked up quite a spread when smacked continuously, with dark, biting overtones.

### Test Rides

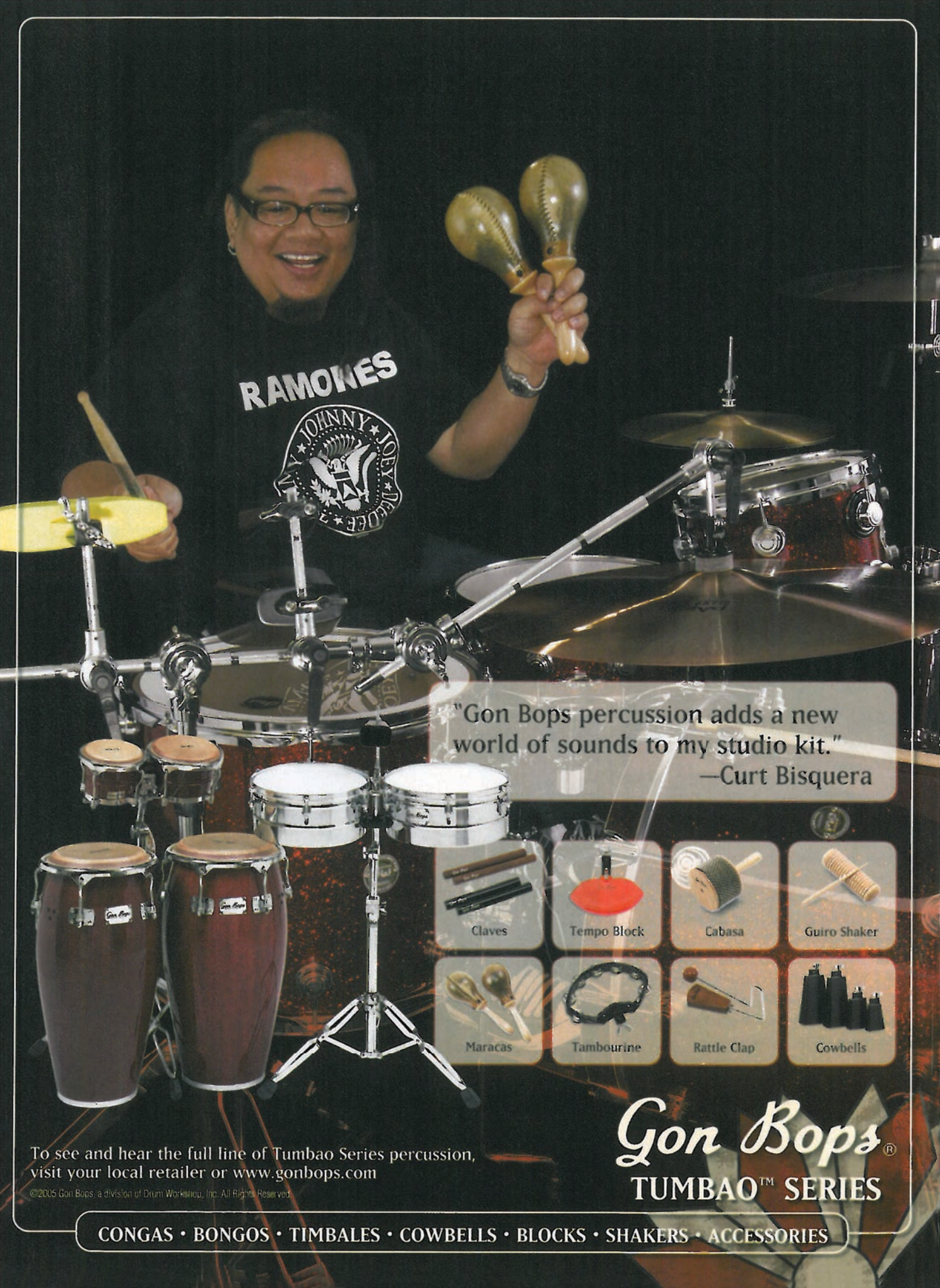
The 20" heavy ride produced a loud, cutting "ping" with very little wash. The bell sound soared to compete with an amplified Stratocaster that wailed at untold sound levels. (In turn, the loudness of the cymbal forced others to turn up!) Perfect for headbanging skin-bashers who expect their performances to be just as mind-numbing as those of their bandmates.

The 21" ride achieved clear and *loud* sticking patterns, which were not lost in the venomous cloud of "hiss" that it produced. Despite this slithering spread, I heard every stroke, regardless of the spot I pinpointed for attack. The "ping" of this ride rang out so clearly that its surface action was louder than bells of other rides I've played. Ironically, its own bell was not as loud as I thought it would be.

The 22" heavy Bell ride was shimmering and loud when played on the bell *or* the larger surface area. Even when played with mallets, brushes, or rods, this cymbal's sonic performance was outstanding. Meinl explains that during the cymbal-making process the bell's hardness is increased by it being dipped into a cool-water bath. This process not only helps to physically strengthen the cymbal but also to increase the ferocity of its attack. The proof was in the puddin'. I could "ching-ching-a-ching" along without a lot of excess nasty build-up. This ride's cut-through power was the best that the Mb20 series has to offer.

### Hard Hats

Mb20 hi-hat cymbals come in Meinl's Soundwave design, which prevents airlock and maximizes projection. Even when just slightly closed, the 14" and 15" hats both produced exquisite multiple overtones. The bottom hi-hat of each pair was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heavier than the top—which itself was not light. (When carried to sessions, the hats had serious heft.) This weight, coupled with the cymbals' brilliant finish, produced great stick response and a clear chick. These full-bodied cymbals were not tinny in any way, even when I clamped them down with my foot pedal as tightly as I could.

As might be expected, the 15" hats had a little more power than the 14" models. Solid, cutting "ticks" could be heard clearly—even with the guitar player pumping out volume. And there was still a noticeable "chick" even when the hats were played with the more aggressive MB20 rides (though at times I did experience a gap in clarity when playing them with some of the crashes). Conversely, I could hear my sticking patterns on the rides even over the slushy cloud of volume produced by the open hats. And that's saying something, because when the 15" hats were only partially opened, their roar rivaled that of a regular crash (which could be a sound engineer's nightmare).

### Super Cymbals And Splash Fests

Look out! The 18" Mb20 China is a kind of "super cymbal" that won't stop giving. If you happen to have cause or opportunity, as I did, to play this cymbal with both hands, you'll hear just how raucous and obnoxious it can be. The sound attacked me like a frenzied horde of shrieking vampire bats. When striking it during the normal course of playing, I recalled the unsettling sounds of violent winds and a restless, churning ocean.

When I tried to use this China in other ways (as a ride, for instance, turned right side up) I discovered that it's fairly one-dimensional. It does its best (or worst, depending on your perspective) work as a shiny noisemaker, invading every crevice of your hearing apparatus. A real peace-breaker.

Meanwhile, the 10" and 12" Rock splashes were sufficiently heavy to get the tone and projection of normal, everyday thin crashes. Their relatively long decay makes them "splash-pluses." Granted, their spread wasn't as wide as that of the crashes or rides in this series. (What would be the point of that?) But they did produce surprisingly dark overtones. On the other hand, these babies definitely did *not* produce the quick *spritz* of a traditional light, thin splash. But let's remember the context here. Next to the Mb20 crashes, they sounded almost delicate!

### Round Up

Our review batch of Mb20 cymbals pushed the envelope of the cymbal-playing experience to the "Nth" degree. The highs were brighter. The lows were darker. The projection was wider. The volume was louder and the decays were longer than those of any cymbals I currently use. And while I contend that the Mb20 series might have applications in softer musical settings, that would be a complete misuse of these tools. If you can fly like Superman, why take the bus, right?

Meinl has successfully designed these extra-strength, hand-hammered slabs of B20 bronze to make drummers more competitive within a sonic jungle. In essence, they've gotten away with telling drummers, "Go bang your head...and do it musically."

**THE NUMBERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| 14" heavy Soundwave hi-hats | $600 |
| 15" heavy Soundwave hi-hats | $650 |
| 16" heavy crash | $360 |
| 17" heavy crash | $395 |
| 18" heavy crash | $430 |
| 19" heavy crash | $470 |
| 20" heavy crash | $500 |
| 20" heavy ride | $500 |
| 21" heavy ride | $560 |
| 22" heavy Bell ride | $610 |
| 10" Rock splash | $200 |
| 12" Rock splash | $225 |
| 18" Rock China | $430 |

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# Pacific BOA Bass Drum Pedal And Hi-Hat Stand

## No Springs Attached

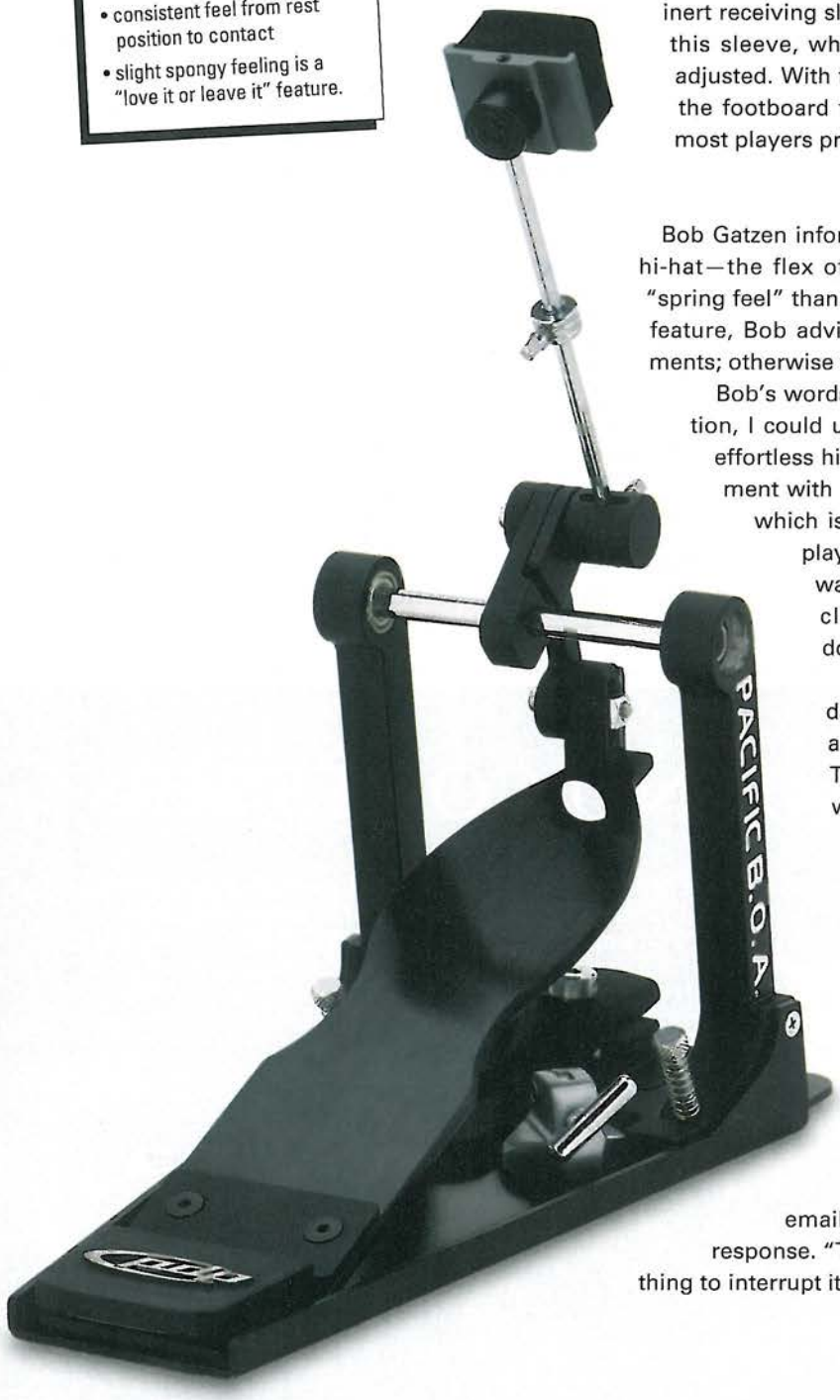
*by T. Bruce Wittet*

**KEY NOTES**

- design eliminates springs, heel plate hinges, and noise
- footboard promotes smooth, natural action
- consistent feel from rest position to contact
- slight spongy feeling is a "love it or leave it" feature.

The BOA (standing for "bowed operating action") pedal is another creation from noted drummer/inventor Bob Gatzen. Almost three years ago Bob sat me down with a couple of prototype pedals, the likes of which I'd never seen. They had no springs or rubber tensors whatsoever. Instead, they relied on the natural flex of the composite-material footboard to provide the "spring action."

Harnessing footboard flex in lieu of springs provides a softer, less mechanical feel and (unless those springs are damped) a quieter action. The BOA design also eliminates the need for footboard hinges. Instead, the footboard simply slides into an inert receiving sleeve. It can be positioned forward or backward within this sleeve, which is the means by which overall pedal tension is adjusted. With the footboard further "out" the tension is looser; with the footboard further "in" the action is tight. Optimum tension for most players probably lies somewhere in between.




### More Hi-Hat Action

Bob Gatzen informed me that on both pedals—but particularly on the hi-hat—the flex of the footboard can simulate a significantly tighter "spring feel" than is available in most spring-driven units. Owing to this feature, Bob advised me to adjust the footboard in very slight increments; otherwise the change might be overwhelming.

Bob's words rang true. With the hi-hat footboard in the taut position, I could use heavier cymbals than normal, yet still experience effortless hi-hat action. This is a good thing if you want to experiment with 18" hi-hat cymbals (Steve Jordan, are you listening?), which is precisely what I did. The pedal behaved as if I was playing medium-weight 14" models. What's more, there was a gradual sensation of travel through space, not a clumsy propelling of the oversized top cymbal downward.

In all other respects the hi-hat stand is a fairly standard two-legged model, with a fold-up baseplate that also lets the stand be adjusted to angle towards you. The adjustable spurs are of the tall twin-pillar design, which dates back to the Camco Oaklawn days.

### Things That Go Bump In The Day

There is definitely a learning curve attached to the BOA bass drum pedal. For example, consider how one usually tries a bass drum pedal sitting on a counter in a drum shop: You give it a little push with your hand, and the beater lurches forward, then bounces a number of times before settling back to the start position. Well, when I did that with the BOA bass drum pedal the beater slammed forward onto the counter!

Alarmed, I contacted DW's customer line, and I emailed Bob Gatzen. "*Don't worry*," was the unanimous response. "This is an inherent aspect of this pedal. It needs something to interrupt its throw."

When it came to attaching the BOA pedal to various bass drum hoops, modern, thicker hoops were easiest. Vintage narrow hoops (Rogers, Slingerland, Ludwig) were challenging. And on a Yamaha Manu Katché kit, with its slender metal-sleeve "mounting hoop," things were touch and go. The clamp grabbed, but the cam rubbed against the bass drum head. Following Bob's advice, I ever so slightly adjusted the throw and the slider adjustment on the cam. The pedal clamp then performed smoothly, without scraping the head.

The bass drum pedal features an adjustable direct-drive cam.

### Therapy Value?

You can take this next bit with a grain of salt.

Six weeks before receiving the BOA test pedals, I suffered a knee injury. For those six weeks, I simply couldn't play due to the pain, although I tried several times using my regular pedals.

When I received the BOA pedals, I decided to "fly blind" with them on three gigs for a national jazz festival. Maybe it's my imagination, or maybe it was the joy of playing after an enforced lapse of over a month, but I experienced no knee pain. Was this due to the "cushioning" effect of the BOA footboard and the overall absence of mechanics?

The first jazz gig was a bashing version of Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* sessions. Both of the BOA pedals initially felt "spongy." But a little twiddling with the key between sets resulted in a gliding, effortless action.

### Beater Adjustment

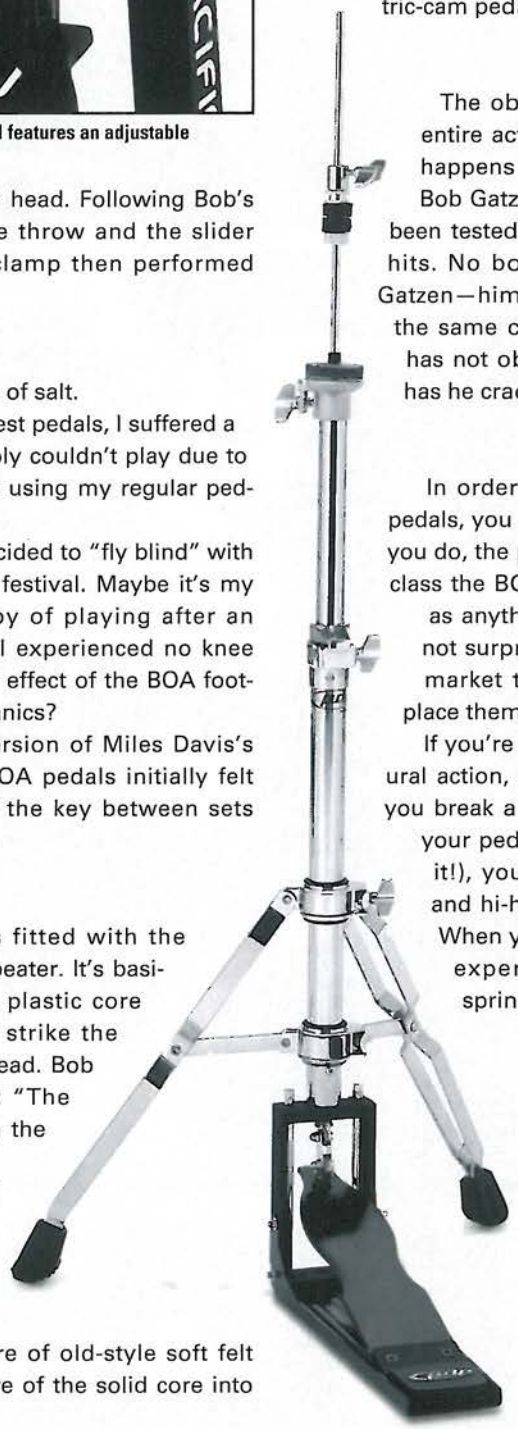
The BOA bass drum pedal comes fitted with the Gatzen-designed HardCore adjustable beater. It's basically a foam impact pad with a hard plastic core imbedded within it. The harder you strike the drum, the more the core impacts the head. Bob Gatzen's words echoed in my head: "The pedal is designed for that beater. With the HardCore the feel is optimized."

Operating in full drum-nerd mode, I studiously tweaked the relationship of foam outer surface to inner plastic core, using the supplied Allen key. For a church gig, I pushed the foam forward, emulating the feel and timbre of old-style soft felt beaters. For louder gigs, I brought more of the solid core into play.

As on the classic Rogers Swivomatic pedal, the BOA beater hits the bass drum head just right of center. To me, striking off center is desirable; you get more resonance.

### The Swing Factor

The BOA bass drum pedal offers no hint of acceleration. That is, it travels smoothly and with a consistent action from the beater's "at rest" position until the beater impact. Many of us have become accustomed to pedals that offer enhanced thrust. If you desire that last little surge of power, you want an eccentric-cam pedal, not the Pacific BOA.



### Durability

The obvious question regarding a pedal whose entire action depends upon its footboard is: What happens when the footboard fatigues or cracks? Bob Gatzen assured me that BOA footboards have been tested with machines that generate *millions* of hits. No board showed measurable degradation. Gatzen—himself a fine drummer—has been playing the same couple of prototypes for three years and has not observed any reduction in tension. Neither has he cracked a footboard.

### Clear Your Head

In order to understand and appreciate the BOA pedals, you need to forget your preconceptions. Once you do, the payoff is ultra-quiet, ultra-smooth action. I class the BOAs as premium pedals that rank as high as anything I've ever played. For that reason, I'm not surprised that Drum Workshop has decided to market them under the Pacific line, rather than place them head-to-head with the DW 9000 series.

If you're looking for ultimate smoothness and natural action, with a moderately springy feel (as when you break a spring and attach eight rubber bands to your pedal post in place of the broken spring—try it!), you should investigate the BOA foot pedal and hi-hat. Play them steadily for a month or so. When you return to your usual pedals, you might experience an acute awareness of regular spring and hinge mechanics.

**THE NUMBERS**

BOA bass drum pedal.....$399
BOA hi-hat stand.....$399
(895) 485-6999, www.pacificdrums.com.

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# Rodney Holmes

## The Drummer's Craft, The Artist's Vision

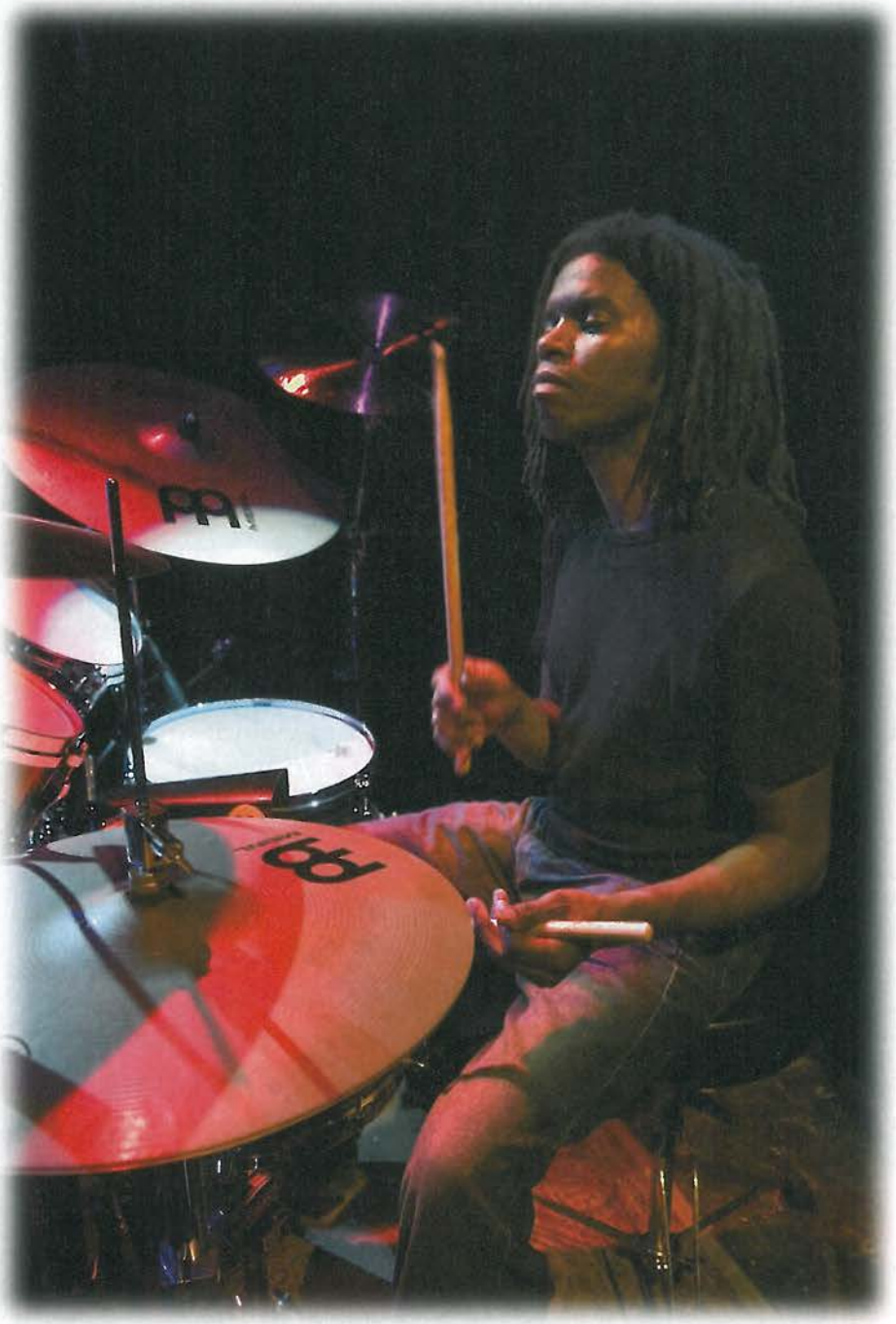
Story by T. Bruce Wittet
Photos by Dennis Boxem

The standing ovation wasn't the end of it. The effects lingered long after Rodney Holmes finished his brilliant set on Day One of this year's Modern Drummer Festival Weekend. Out on the lawns, as the crowd dispersed, and as they lined up for admission on Day Two, Festival goers were raving about the performance. Simply put, Rodney Holmes blew people away. Reasons cited were his amazing technique, his intricate patterns, and his artsy sense of placement. Some also mentioned Rodney's two backing tracks, taken from his new solo album, *12 Months Of October*. The consensus was that he didn't just execute with precision, he drummed with an artist's vision.

Who knows, maybe some of the things that made Rodney rich at the MD Fest made him poor in the eyes of Santana. A few years ago, on the heels of Rodney's last *MD* interview, he was unceremoniously released from the band on the eve of a major tour. No reasons were given.

Ironically, for that interview, longtime Santana percussionist Raul Rekow spoke to us at a Santana soundcheck, exclaiming, "Rodney Holmes is one of the most underrated drummers in the world. When you list the top drummers, he's in there, man."

Although the Santana experience hurt deeply, Rodney didn't let it extinguish his flame. After all, he'd had successful long-term recording and touring stints with Joe Zawinul, The Brecker Brothers, Don Byron, and The Hermanators. He's now a charter member of an act that's burning up the continent, The Steve Kimock Band.



With Kimock, Rodney's contribution is nothing short of stunning. We're talking an instrumental, guitar-based band that seems to span early Allman Bros. ("In Memory Of Elizabeth Reid") to fusion all-stars Jazz Is Dead. Although some characterize the SKB as a jam band, Rodney is quick to point out that the songs, penned by Kimock and Holmes, are not mere blowing fests, but carefully orchestrated compositions. Still, there's ample room to stretch out. Some have suggested that Rodney's adventurous forays on SKB's new record, *Eudemonic*, are reminiscent of '70s-era Neil Peart, with ear-catching drum patterns, blazingly fast fills, odd meter forays, and over the top double pedal work. Amazing is the word.

Rodney Holmes views his instrument as an artist views his palette. Although he's capable of befuddling chops, he's also one who picks and chooses his moments. His credo of never giving it all away is a foundation of his art.

A firm believer in the effect of a solo, Rodney nevertheless shuns excess. When he goes to double bass, for example, it's not to make like a freight train, it's for the sound. (Besides, the truth is, he can play almost as rapidly on a single pedal!) Similarly, when Holmes creates a complex ostinato, it's to weave diverse parts into a meaningful, musically appropriate whole.

Funny thing about Rodney: Even when he's unleashing the beast, he never appears as if he's barely hanging on. He's got a firm grasp of the reins, still forging a groove that's lush, steady, and comfortable.

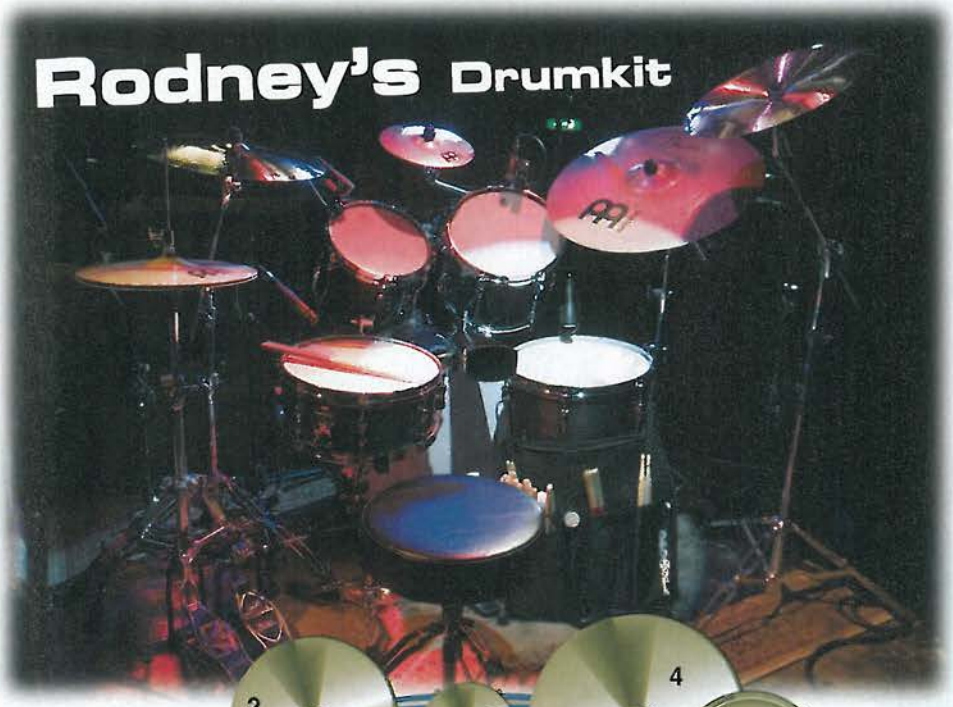
During this interview, as Rodney speaks in his soft-spoken, no-nonsense manner, you'll detect a vigilance, a pursuit of excellence. He's clearly not in a race with anyone—except himself. And even then, he quietly and methodically goes about his work, challenging himself to do better with a tremendous inner thrust that belies an outward tranquility.

We caught up with Holmes while he was on tour in Europe with The Bill Evans/Randy Brecker Soul Bop Band. It was a brief break from his duties in the SKB.

**MD:** Did you have any idea about the effect you had created at the MD Festival Weekend?

**Rodney:** I had no idea. I felt that a few

# Rodney's Drumkit



**Drums:** Tama
Starclassic Maple

A. 5½x14 maple snare
B. 8x10 tom
C. 8x12 tom
D. 14x14 floor tom
E. 14x16 floor tom (not in photos)
F. 16x22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Meinl

1. 14" Byzance Dry hi-hats
2. 17" Byzance brilliant medium-thin crash (or Mb20 heavy crash)
3. 10" Byzance splash
4. 22" Byzance heavy ride
5. 14" Byzance China
6. 13" Byzance Dry hi-hats (mounted on X-Hat, not in photos)
7. Meinl cowbell (mounted on bass drum)

**Hardware:** Tama, including a LeverGlide hi-hat stand and an Iron Cobra PowerGlide double pedal

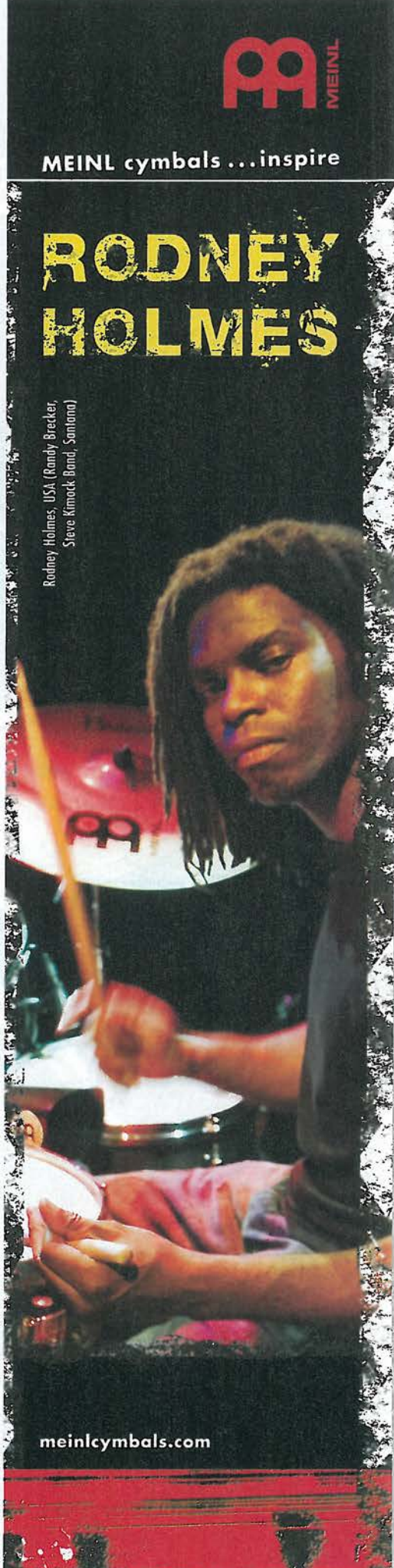
**Heads:** Remo coated Ambassadors on snare and tom batters, clear Diplomat on snare-side, clear Ambassadors on bottoms of toms, coated WeatherKing on bass drum (or clear PowerStroke 4)

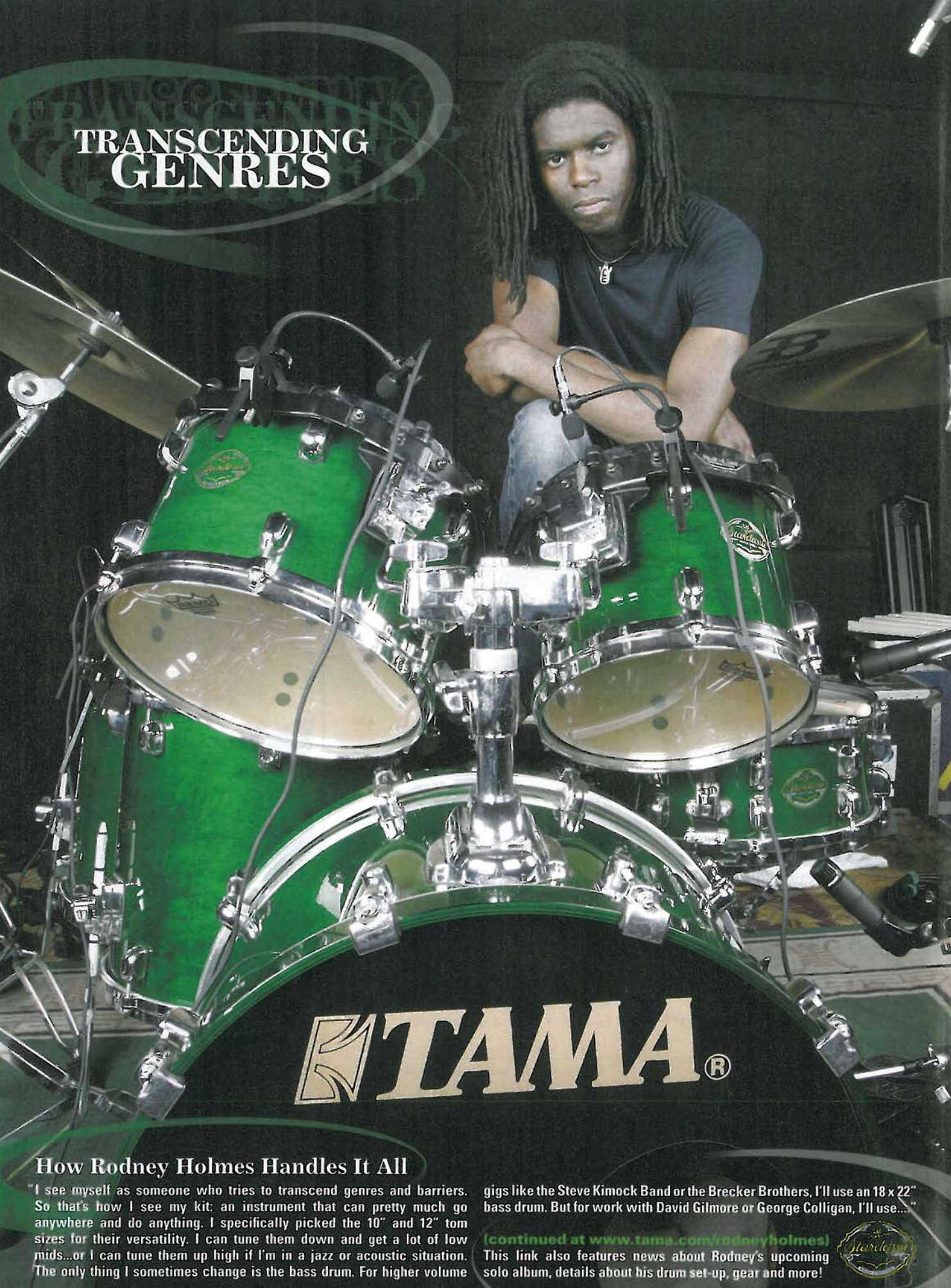
**Sticks:** Vater 5A and 5B (wood tip) sticks, Poly-Flex brush, wire retractable brush, Splashstick Lite, and various mallets

people in the audience appreciated what I did, but that was the extent of it, and that the next day everybody would forget about it. Afterwards I really didn't talk to many people about it. Some said, "I really enjoyed the clinic" or "Nice job," and then it was on to the next drummer. I had no idea that it had left any kind of real impact.

**MD:** The standing ovation didn't suggest otherwise to you?

**Rodney:** [laughs] Where I was, I couldn't see very well. I didn't realize it was a standing ovation. I *thought* I saw people standing up, but I didn't have enough nerve




## How Rodney Holmes Handles It All

"I see myself as someone who tries to transcend genres and barriers. So that's how I see my kit: an instrument that can pretty much go anywhere and do anything. I specifically picked the 10" and 12" tom sizes for their versatility. I can tune them down and get a lot of low mids...or I can tune them up high if I'm in a jazz or acoustic situation. The only thing I sometimes change is the bass drum. For higher volume gigs like the Steve Kimock Band or the Brecker Brothers, I'll use an 18 x 22" bass drum. But for work with David Gilmore or George Colligan, I'll use..."

**(continued at www.tama.com/rodneyholmes)**
This link also features news about Rodney's upcoming solo album, details about his drum set-up, gear and more!

to ask anybody backstage if that was a true standing ovation.

**MD:** Well, it was a spontaneous eruption, not one of those ones where people look around and then stand up out of courtesy. It was one of the good ones.

**Rodney:** Well, I'm glad to hear that. Later I got emails from people who attended the Festival, people who went to my Web site and wrote, "You were my favorite at the Festival," and that what I did and said touched them.

**MD:** What sort of things did they point out?

**Rodney:** They seemed to like the combination of my technique and musicality, and that I was very honest: They liked the way I answered the questions.

**MD:** It's ironic that your former Santana colleague, Raul Rekow, was performing at the same Festival, especially after he uttered those complimentary words when we did your first *MD* interview. But it seems your life has gone on successfully after Santana.

**Rodney:** Without getting into the minutiae of that whole situation, there was some vindication—still being in demand after Santana for touring and recording—even this Festival appearance, for example. *Particularly* this Festival appearance, because I had the impression that a lot of people had never heard me before.

People think that if you're not playing a high-profile gig anymore then that's the end of your career. But that's not true.

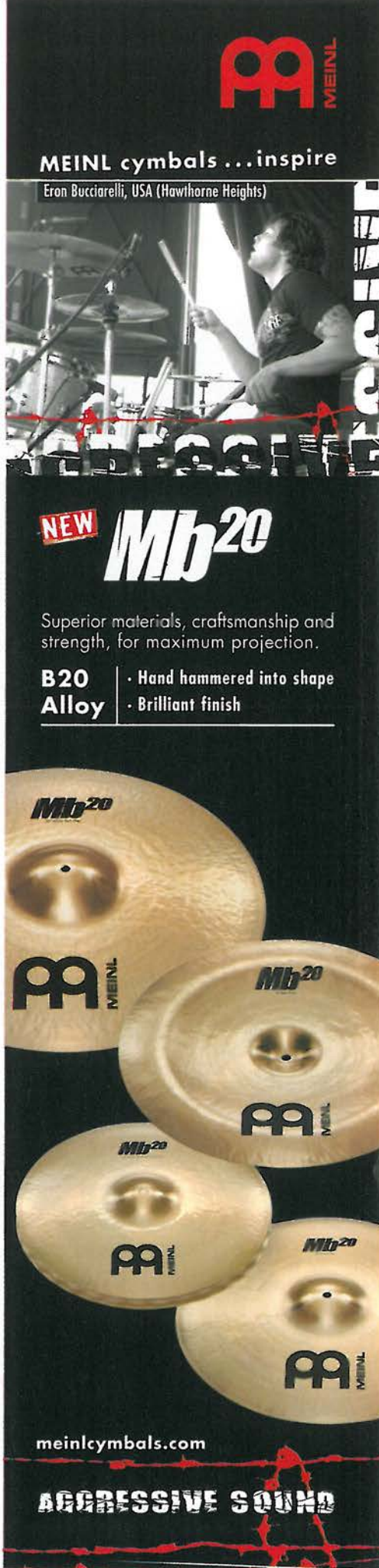
# Rodney On Record

## Recordings

| Artist | Album |
|---|---|
| Rodney Holmes | 12 Months Of October |
| Steve Kimock Band | Eudemonic |
| Jim Weider | Percolator |
| Santana | Supernatural |
| The Hermanators | Twisted |
| Monday Michiru | 4 Seasons |
| George Colligan's Mad Science | Realization |
| David Gilmore | Ritualism |
| The Brecker Brothers | Out Of The Loop |
| Don Byron | Nu Blaxploitation |
| Tom Guarna | Crossover |
| Jane Getter | See Jane Run |
| Michael Zilber | Two Coasts |
| Clyde Criner | Behind The Sun |
| Leni Stern | Ten Songs |
| Jean-Paul Bourelly | Trippin' |

## Favorites

| Artist | Album | Drummer |
|---|---|---|
| Mahavishnu Orchestra | The Lost Trident Sessions | Billy Cobham |
| Radiohead | Kid A | Phil Selway |
| Miles Davis | Nefertiti | Tony Williams |
| Tony Williams Lifetime | Believe It | Tony Williams |
| James Brown | Best Of | various |
| Rush | Moving Pictures | Neil Peart |
| Weather Report | Domino Theory | Omar Hakim |
| Chick Corea | Three Quartets | Steve Gadd |
| Earth, Wind & Fire | I Am | Fred White |
| The Who | Tommy | Keith Moon |
| Allan Holdsworth | Metal Fatigue | Chad Wackerman |
| Massive Attack | Mezzanine | Andy Gangadeen |
| Frank Zappa | Joe's Garage | Vinnie Colaiuta |

You're still alive, you have a life, and you have things to say. You're still evolving and improving. Santana was one stage in my life, but by no means was it the peak. And I feel way better about myself and my playing than I did when I was with Santana.

**MD:** Your dismissal, judged under labor law criteria, wouldn't really have been "for cause."

**Rodney:** Exactly. The challenge for me was not to let it tear me down psychologically, not to let it break my spirit in terms of becoming bitter. I've seen that happen to other musicians. For whatever reasons, they lose a high-profile gig and focus on that, and it festers and becomes this malignant thing. They're obsessed with who stabbed them in the back.

It's not that I didn't want to know why it happened. You want to know who your friends are. You like to know where you stand with people. With that said, I realized that the best thing for me to do was to wash my hands of the whole thing: I had to cleanse myself, because it was dirty. People were hearing things from that side of the country about me, things that they were saying, like, "Rodney wasn't a team player."

**MD:** Right. And that you displayed an "East Coast attitude."

**Rodney:** Yeah, an "East Coast attitude," which is funny because most people don't even know I'm from the East Coast. They [the Santana organization] would always bring this up, "Well, he's from New York." I've worked with people from all over the world, so getting that from people in California didn't make any sense. I could have been lured into a war of words, but I realized that this would be counterproductive, not only to my career, but to me spiritually.

When the singer, Tony Lindsay, called and asked what I was going to do, I said, "I'll find situations where people want to hear me. I'll be okay."

**MD:** Did it take long for you to find such situations?

**Rodney:** No. I hadn't done many clinics at that point, but a few clinics came in. I remembered saying to my sponsors, Just don't bill me as "the drummer from Santana." I did gigs around New York and people started calling, saying, "I hear you're not with Santana anymore. Can you do this tour, or this record?" That was a huge boost to my confidence. I got a call to play with Steve Kimock, and I was playing with other people. Before Steve and I became partners, I was just a hired drummer.

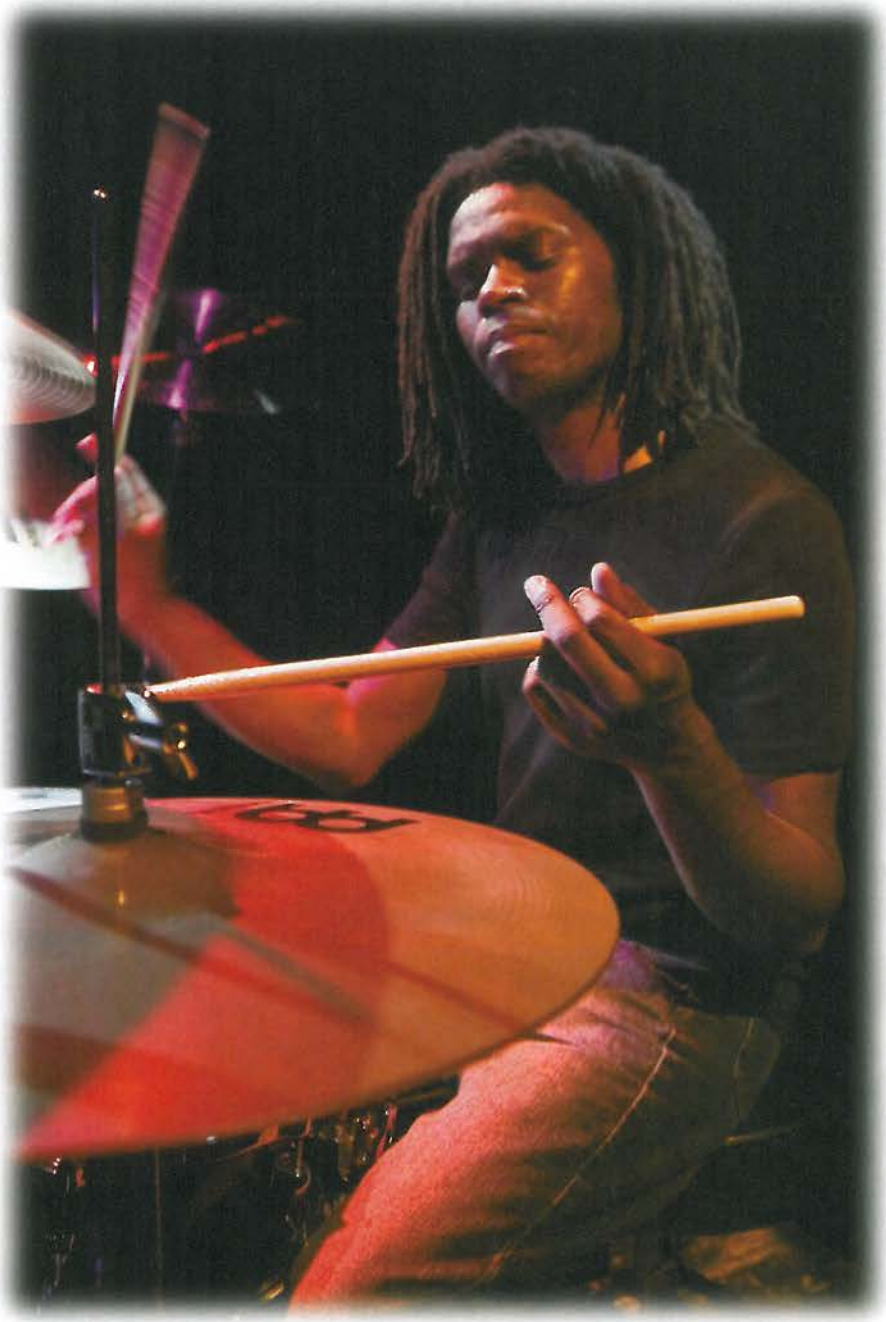
**MD:** I wondered about the extent of your involvement. In the band's press pack, there's no full

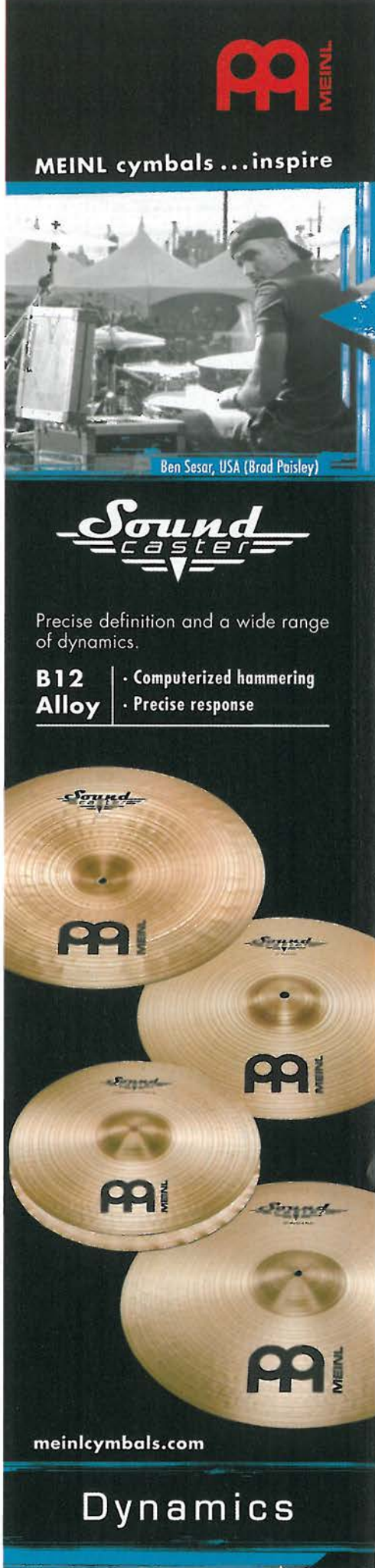
band photo, just a glossy of you and Kimock. How does this partnership work?

**Rodney:** Looking back, Steve had a manager who had worked with Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. He knew who I was because I'd worked with Wayne Shorter. He told Steve about me, and that's how the first tour happened. Steve dug it and I liked it; I thought it was interesting and we kept doing it. Steve sat me down one day and said, "We've got a nice chemistry going. I'd like you to get involved more, not just in terms of playing, but intellectual property—doing some writing." He wanted a partnership. I knew that meant commitment and that this project was worth it. Also, I'd begun writing material for my own CD. I was in a writing mode and realized that this could work.

**MD:** I was wondering if Steve was initially taken aback by the strength of your accompaniment. There aren't many drummers who could do the sorts of things you do with him, or, at least, *get away* with doing them in a "guitar band."

**Rodney:** He was involved with other bands, instrumental situations, in which there was a lot of room for the musicians. When I started playing with Steve, he'd give me material and say, "Go ahead and



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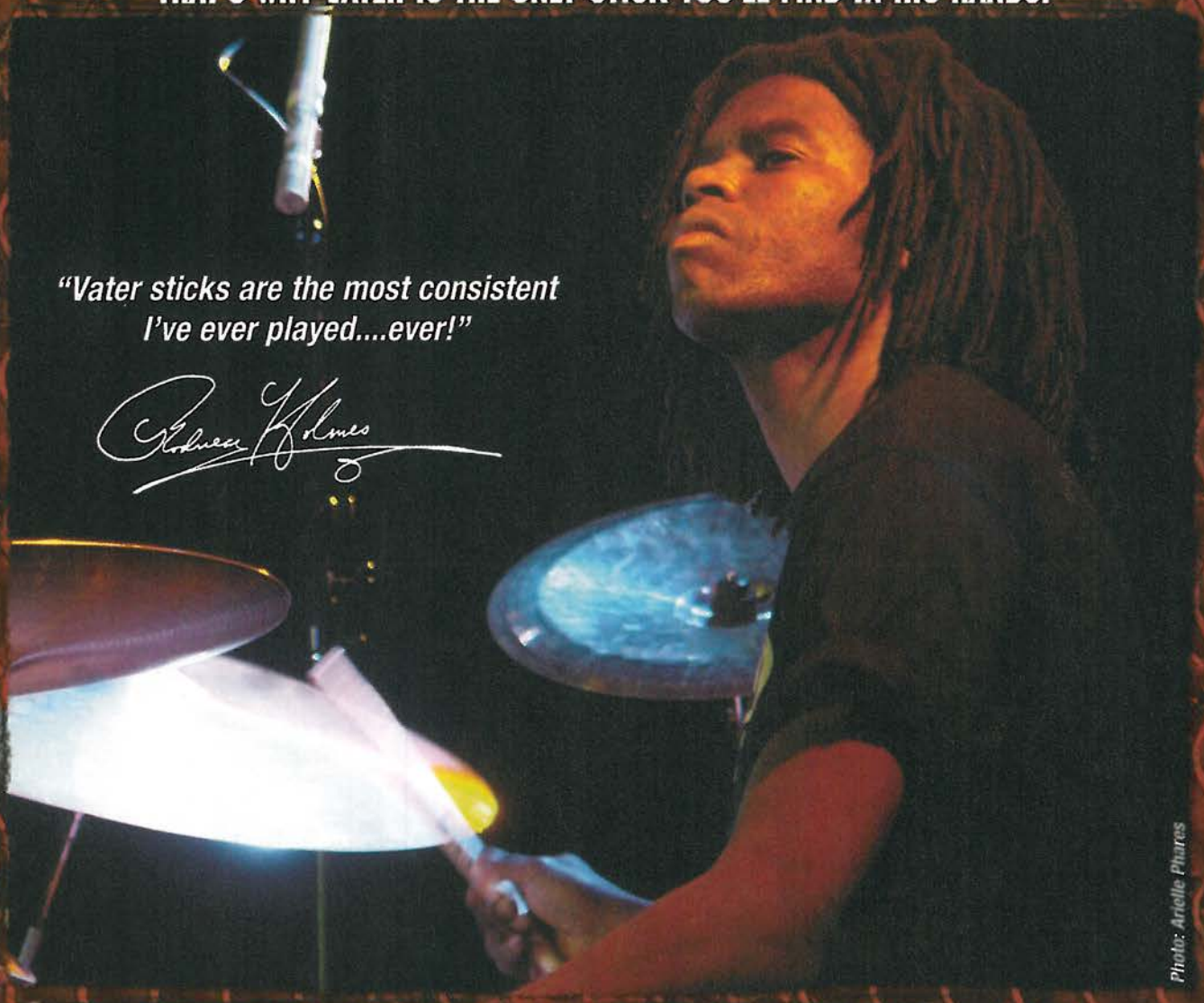


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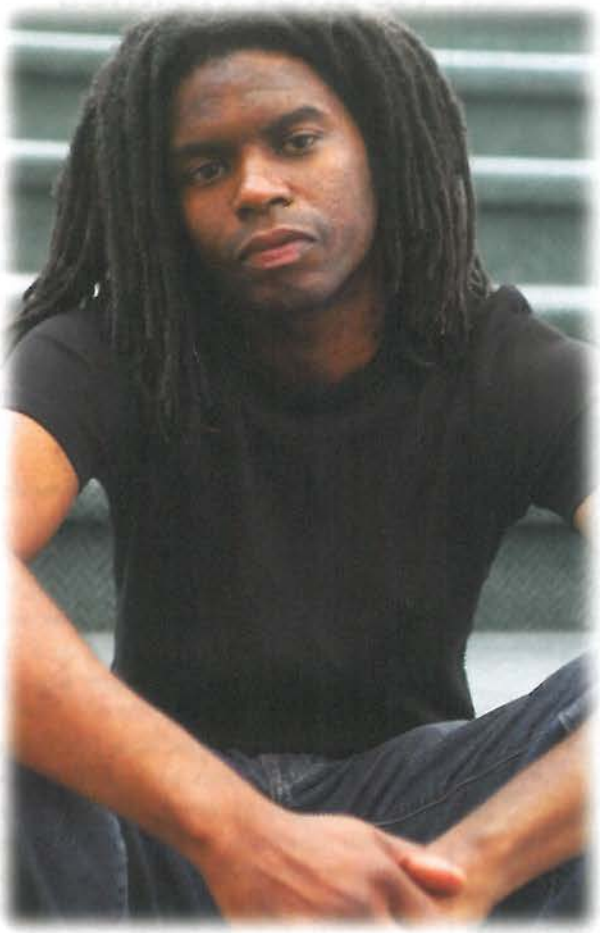
## Rodney Holmes



**"I think pursuing technique is a never-ending process. You can learn every word in the dictionary, but it doesn't mean you have to write the same books over and over."**

try it." I'd ask what kind of a groove he'd like, or how open he wanted it, or how tight, and his answer was always, "Let's just play, and you can play what you feel would be best." There were certain things written, but for the most part they wanted me to come up with my part.

When *I* would bring in material, I would be pretty specific about the bass part and the drum part. As far as the guitar part, I would tell him to check it out and see what he came up with. Hopefully it doesn't sound like a jam band. Hopefully it sounds like songs that are arranged, but there's always room to open up. Live, it opens up a lot more. I think the ultimate goal is to create music that is unique, which was also the reason I began work on my own recording. In a collaboration, there are always compromises, so hopefully amidst the compromises there is something fresh and imaginative, and that has its own language.

**MD:** If you take the tune "The Bronx Experiment," which makes it onto both your solo album and Kimock's album *Eudemonic*, were there compromises here?

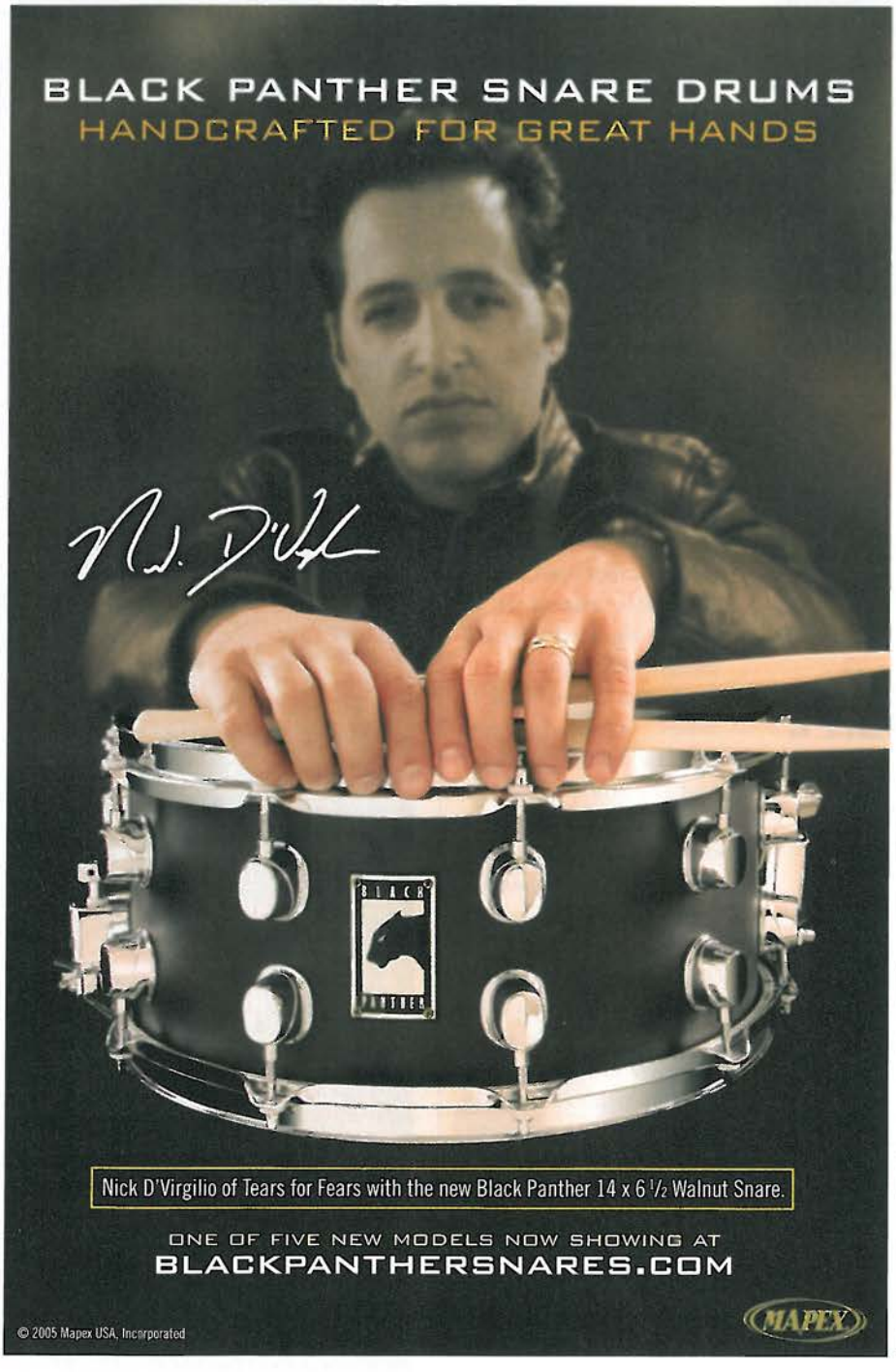
**Rodney:** Oh yeah. The version on my record is the original version. It was supposed to have more of an edge than it has on the SKB version. I realized that he had a different group of musicians and a different situation, and I tried to make it relevant for that band.

**MD:** It's almost as if you've injected a world music component.

**Rodney:** Yeah, and it lends itself to that because of the harmony and the tonality of the tune. When I wrote it, I didn't expect that element to be as prominent, but with SKB it just seemed appropriate to flesh that out more. Obviously the SKB version is more guitar-oriented, whereas mine has a little more of an electronica edge and is a little more urban. I wanted to arrange it in such a way as to take advantage of what everybody does well, so if I had to sacrifice some elements of the tune, it's okay because something else good would happen.

**MD:** Which Bronx were you referring to in the title? It's not the area around 161 Street and Third Avenue where the car mechanics hustle work right on the sidewalk.

**Rodney:** [laughs] When I used to live in




## Rodney Holmes

the Bronx, to me it always represented a weird experiment. The borough itself seemed to be very different from the other four boroughs. It seemed like the Bronx has always spawned interesting people who end up doing interesting things in a lot of different industries. Don Byron's from the Bronx; there are a lot of great directors and writers from the Bronx. I'd always meet people doing different and interesting things, and these were people born in the Bronx, whereas you go to Manhattan and not that many people come from there. The Bronx, it seemed, was a fertile place.

**MD:** I'm thinking that in our last interview we didn't really bring out the extent of Tony Williams' influence, at least in your formative years. My editor, Bill Miller, was watching some old footage of Tony with Miles, circa 1966, and remarked on a certain resemblance, a certain kindred demeanor.

**Rodney:** For the longest time I had never seen Tony Williams play. I had these records, such as *Four And More* and *Nefertiti*, and I was hypnotized by the way he played with Miles and the rhythm section. It was expanding and contracting and so *clean*. He had a way of dancing and spiraling around with the time, but he knew what he was doing at all times. Everyone in the band knew, too. There was this clarity and purpose to what he did. I was totally transfixed by the sound, the rhythm, and the groove. It was beyond style; it was about music.

Later on, when he created The Tony Williams Lifetime, I loved the fact that he incorporated other kinds of music, and that it was a true and honest fusion of concepts, and not fusion in the negative sense. It seemed like he understood funk and rock, and the sonic qualities, and that he fused it with the open-ended expressiveness of jazz.

I learned a lot of Tony's stuff I heard on those early records. Keep in mind that I was still listening to Earth, Wind & Fire, Parliament Funkadelic, Led Zeppelin, and Rush. It's funny with musicians: They figure if they're listening to one thing then they can't listen to anything else. The implication is that if you're into jazz you can't listen to other kinds of music, which makes no sense to me.

**MD:** Well, there are certainly parallels with Tony. You're both composers, and you both meld many different styles. But it gets deeper, right down to your left-hand grip.

**Rodney:** The grip! I think that's a coincidence, because like I said, I didn't see him play at first. Later when I did see him play, it wasn't what I thought he'd look like! When he played, it was very physical.

It's a funny thing that when you try to play certain things, there's only so many ways to pull a sound out of a drum or cymbal. When I was a teenager, getting my hands on everything Tony did, I was trying to pull those same tones out of the drums, and the same kind of spread and color he got out of the cymbals. I would probably do some of the same things he did, like getting some of those rimshot sounds out of the snare drum, and doing those flams he used. I think more than the actual notes, it was Tony's attitude that influenced me. In other words, everything was okay, provided it was played with *purpose*. It wasn't just to play something because you *could*, or because you had practiced it.

Bruce Lee talked a lot about being honest, about being ready to do things you might not have done before, and about being in the moment. I believe that if you're *really* in the moment, you're not going to regurgitate everything you've been practicing. Musicians see somebody play and assume he doesn't have the facility to do this or that, just because in his current musical environment he's not doing those things. But they don't think that maybe that person didn't *want* to do those things on that gig.

At some point, it's less about the licks and more about the concept. I would always continue to practice technical things so that I would be ready to communicate. I would always try and get out of playing lick number one or lick number five.

**MD:** When you look at your facility for rapidly alternating right hand and bass drum strokes, for example, how long does it usually take you to get something like that to gel before you can take it to the bandstand?

**Rodney:** It usually takes a while. I don't want to play something just because I *can*; I want it to become a natural part of my vocabulary. As far as that technique, I felt that I wanted to separate my limbs and break up single strokes between them. I'd work on playing singles between my left hand, left foot, right hand, right foot, and so on, and that's something I thought would come in handy in certain musical situations. Practicing rhythmic permutations with a metronome expanded my vocabulary, and I would do so whenever I had time.

I think pursuing technique is a never-ending process. You can learn every word in the dictionary, but it doesn't mean you have to write the same books over and over. There are so many things you can do, including things that people have been playing for decades.

Some people want to play faster than everybody else. Technique is extremely important to me, but I think that sometimes people treat it as an end, rather than focusing on what they want to create, and realizing that you develop techniques to create things. I think sometimes drummers lose touch with that.

**MD:** In your last *MD* interview, you described being acutely aware of note subdivisions and knowing exactly where you are, even when going way out with a fill. How do you reconcile that technical strictness with your apparent looseness? A lot of your stuff seems to tumble out all relaxed.

**Rodney:** There has to be a degree of technique and control before a person can be free with what they're doing. No matter what it is you do, you have to have technique to create. No, I take that back: There are people who create beautiful things who *don't* have a lot of technique. But you see Picasso and he does these apparently simple paintings. I'm sure he studied anatomy and realistic drawing. The truth is he could do it all! If you look at the Impressionists, of course they could do technical paintings, but they had something to *say* with that technique. Drummers and other musicians forget that step, and it turns into some kind of Olympics.

Again, I use Bruce Lee as an example. He said that when a person is purely technical, then they've become a machine; they're no longer a human being. And when they're totally instinctual, with no control, then they're just an animal. The ideal is to have a successful combination of both, and that's what I've

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always tried to do.

How I reconcile the two, the technique and the looseness, is that I can get the sounds I'm hearing in my head. I find ways of getting things to sound the way they should sound and feel the way they should feel.

**MD:** Do you feel you need to address any playing deficiencies, or even areas of interest in the technical area?

**Rodney:** There are things I'd like to be able to do and *will* be able to do. There are some orchestrations, things that I hear, that I think will be practical and musical, not freakish. When I try to do them, it's a whole different story.

Some of the things I did at the Modern Drummer Festival *looked* very easy, like some of the patterns I improvised over. It wasn't easy to get them to "sit," though, in a comfortable way, and to get them to "dance." I didn't want them to sound hard or like math.

There were a couple of ostinato patterns on the kick drum, against which I was doing things on top of the toms and cymbals. I wanted it to breathe in a natural way, but there is a certain precision that's required in order for that to happen. This is the paradox: In order for something to feel natural, there's a degree of precision required, because if you're sloppy with it, it doesn't feel natural at all. And if you're too robotic with it, it may sound impressive, but it's boring. You won't draw people in. You'll draw *drummers* in because they'll want to know how you're doing it. But it wouldn't be anything you'd want to sit and listen to.

It's a hard thing, but that's why I love this instrument. I'd like to clean up my hands more, basically go back to fundamentals and get it better.

**MD:** Steve Gadd told me that whenever he re-tweaks his traditional grip, he goes back to his basics: the palm facing the wall and the second finger sort of extended. Do you re-examine your traditional grip regularly?

**Rodney:** I do. Steve described something very specific. That is great and may not work well for a different pair of hands, and that's another challenge: finding out what works well for *you*. There are so many different methods. I've studied the Moeller technique, but I don't use it as religiously as other people. There's so many ways of playing traditional grip alone. Some things

work for everyone because of the way the hand is made, but others won't be as comfortable. You have to decide whether you're doing something out of obligation or because you've found out that it works for you.

**MD:** But you don't want to be taking the road of least resistance, doing something that's easier and maybe incorrect.

**Rodney:** Exactly. With experience and playing, you find out what works for you. It might be something that didn't work for you two years ago, but in some gig you're doing now, works perfectly.

**MD:** You've made a huge change recently. After being with Zildjian for years, you've switched to Meinl cymbals. You are a masterful cymbal player, as reflected in all the different bell sounds and timbres you extract from rides and crashes. Can you find all of these sounds in the Meinl catalog?

**Rodney:** Yes I can. These guys are really pushing the envelope. They're really willing to create new sounds but still have a solid foundation in a notion of what creates a good cymbal sound, meaning a nice wide range of overtones. They know they have to give drummers what they expect out of traditional cymbals as well as explore new sounds.

I tried out Meinl's Byzance Turkish cymbals, which are great. They have warmth and they cut in a non-invasive way; they have a presence without sounding like a manhole cover. They're aggressive enough that I can push them and pull back and take advantage of the bell and the shape and the spread.

I was a little surprised because, compared to other companies, Meinl is relatively young and they want to experiment. I love the fact that everybody in the company is a drummer.

Also, they seemed to respond to what I was doing. When [Meinl artist rep] Norbert Saemann approached me, I felt he really got it. It wasn't a case of, "You're a Dennis Chambers kind of guy." He was listening to what I did on the drums and cymbals. The fact that Meinl has people working for them who are really listening to drummers means they're really listening to the cymbals. That attention to the sound and to the music got me excited. And they really want to work with me, so I'm excited about that.

**MD:** You've been with Tama for quite a long time.

**Rodney:** What can I say? They make great drums. I mean, occasionally there are little things I wish they'd do differently, but I wouldn't be there if I didn't believe in the drums.

**MD:** We've mentioned your CD, *12 Months Of October*. When will it be released, and via what means?

**Rodney:** It's now available on the Internet on my Web site [www.rodneyholmes.com] or on Steve Kimock's site [www.kimock.com], and at CD Baby. At some point, I expect to have distribution and have it in stores.

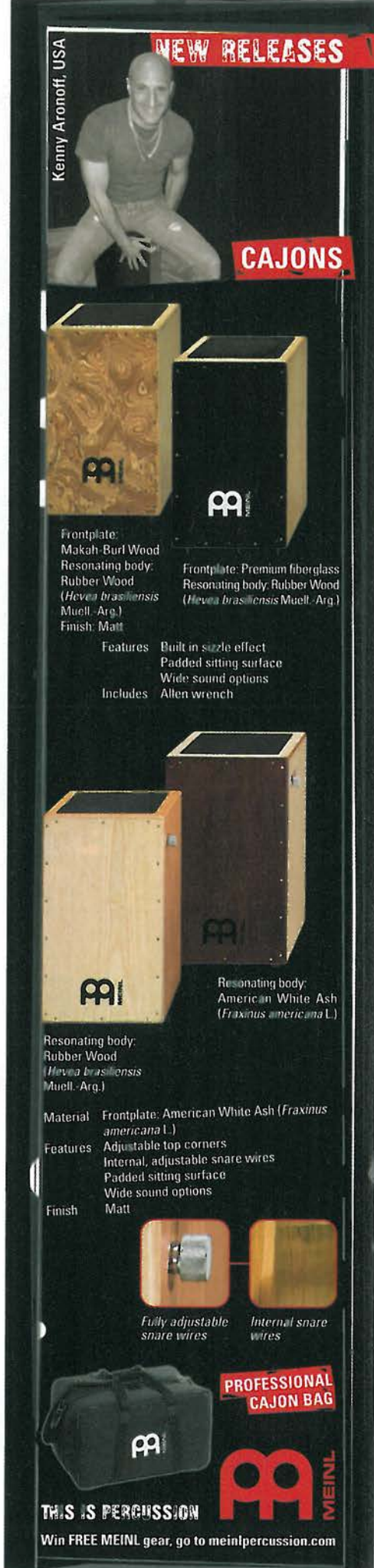
**MD:** What's the significance of the title?

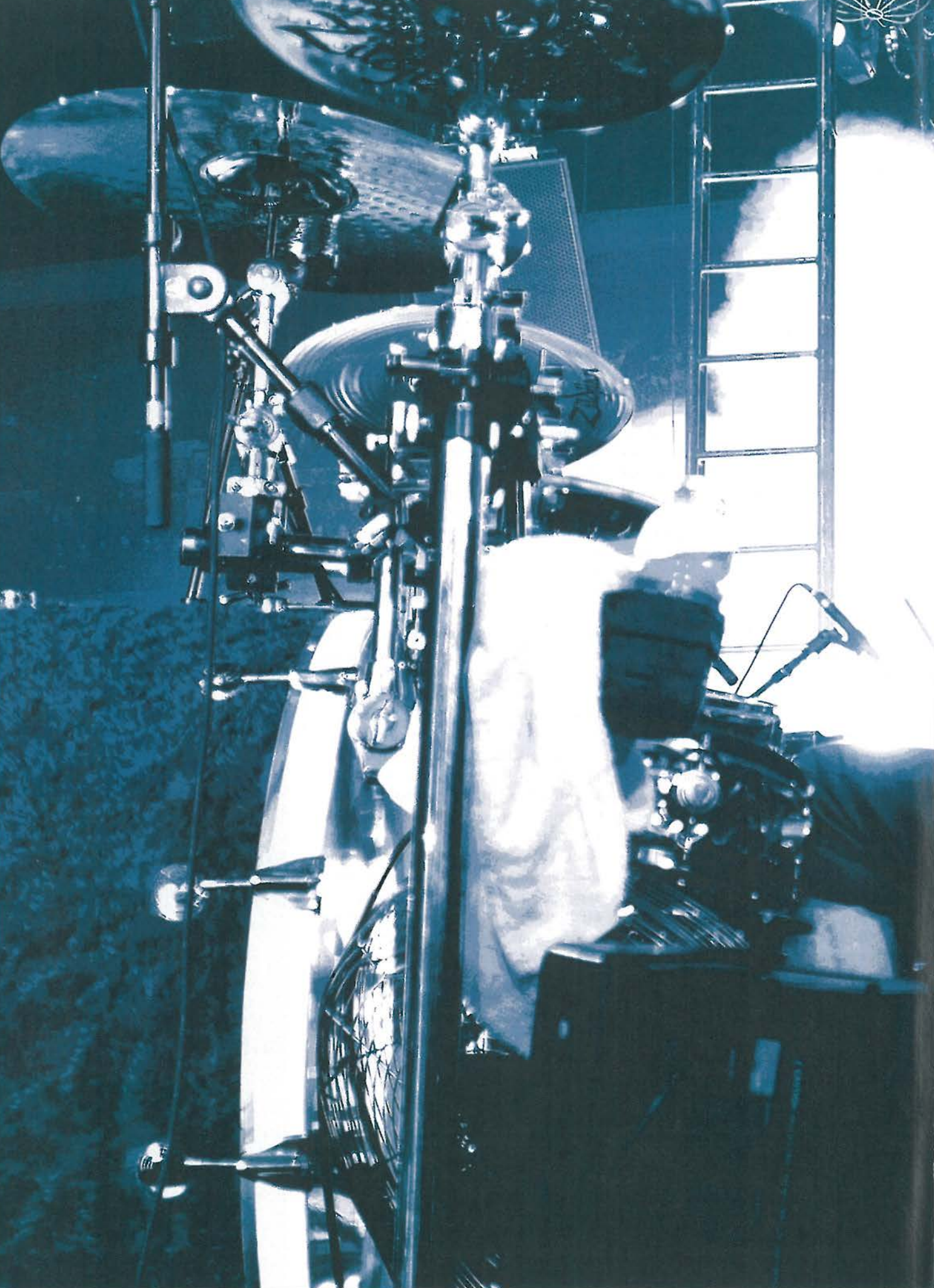
**Rodney:** October is my favorite month. There's something about the fall that's always fascinated me. A lot of people associate the fall with the time everything dies, but it's also when things open up, when things begin. I always feel the most alive and creative in the fall. A lot of cultures believe that it's the time the veil that separates our world from the other world is at its thinnest.

**MD:** Drummers are going to love the solos in "Radio Warning," right down to the snuck-in cowbell, and also the fact that your resolution points are not typical—you know, a fill every eight bars. I also think they'll dig the fills at around the four-minute mark, the roundhouse triplet ones that end on the bass drum. Across the board, these fills and complementing phrases are not ones that we often hear in pop music.

**Rodney:** Yeah, just because there's a definitive song structure, there's no reason that it shouldn't be expansive and display the kind of depth of a jazz record. I think record companies and musicians should give people more credit. If the music is truly speaking to them, they'll take that trip with you. You don't have to dumb it down for them. I think you do the audience a disservice by not taking them seriously. They're already being fed so much junk food.

**To hear tracks featuring Rodney, listen to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.**





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# Coheed & Cambria's Josh

By the time Coheed & Cambria are halfway through "A Favor House Atlantic," which comes towards the end of their seven-song, hour-plus set at a rock club in San Diego, California, Josh Eppard is throwing his whole *body* into his drumkit.

The sweaty, packed crowd at The Casbah surges to within inches of lead singer Claudio Sanchez, singing along and punctuating the air with their fists. Eppard is caught up in the energy, giving as much to the crowd as he's getting. At the end of the song the drummer sits back, throws a manic smile towards his drum tech, and then counts off the next track.

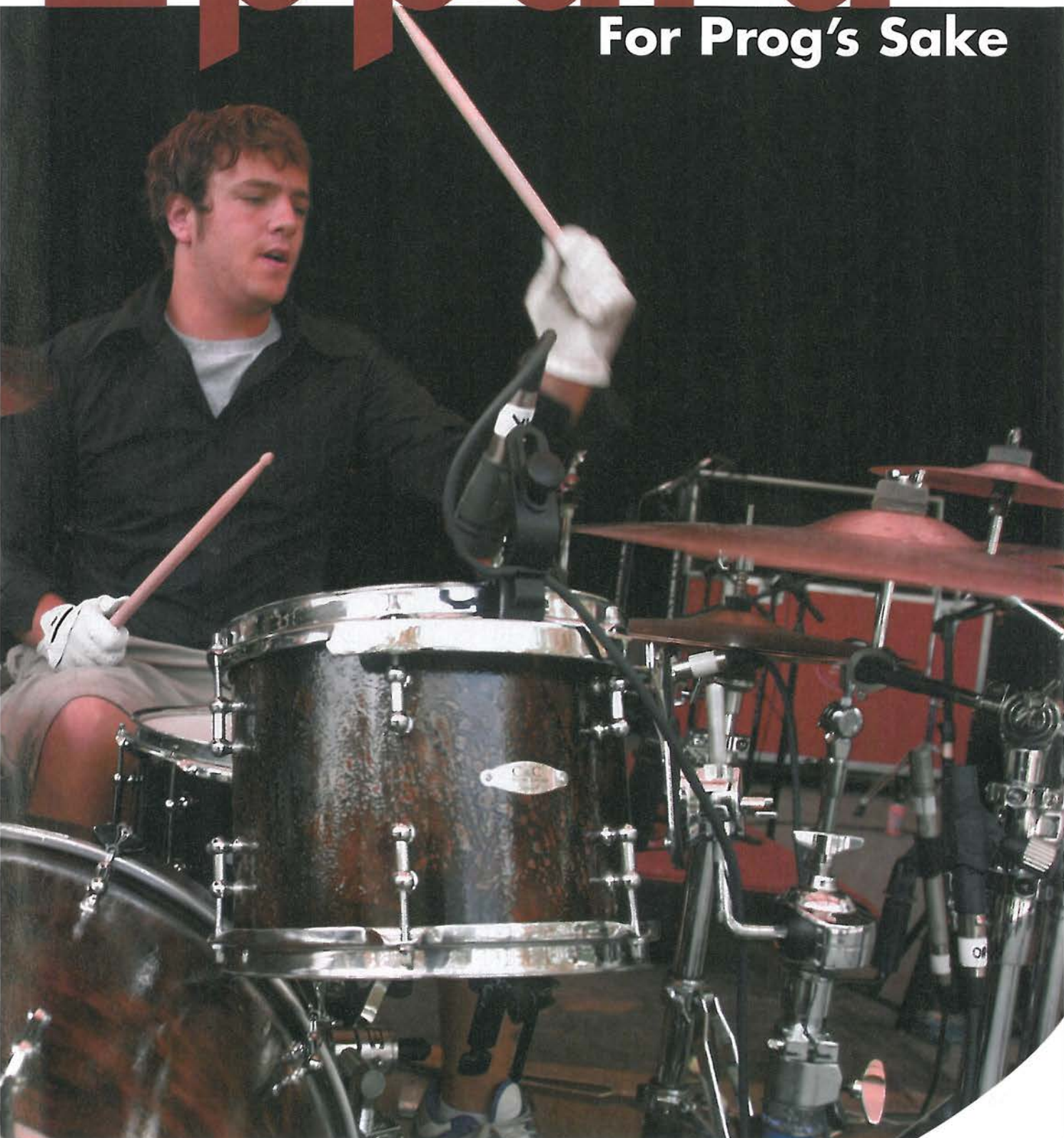
Just another night for Coheed & Cambria, the quartet that got its start in upstate New York and made a name for themselves across the globe by playing an evocative brand of prog-rock that skates as close to metal as it does pop. Certainly Sanchez, who is the band's chief songwriter, gives plenty of room to Eppard, bassist Mic Todd, and guitarist Travis Stever to find their spots, but more often than not the drummer finds himself anchoring the band.

Story by David John Farinella

Photos by Paul La Raia

# Eppard

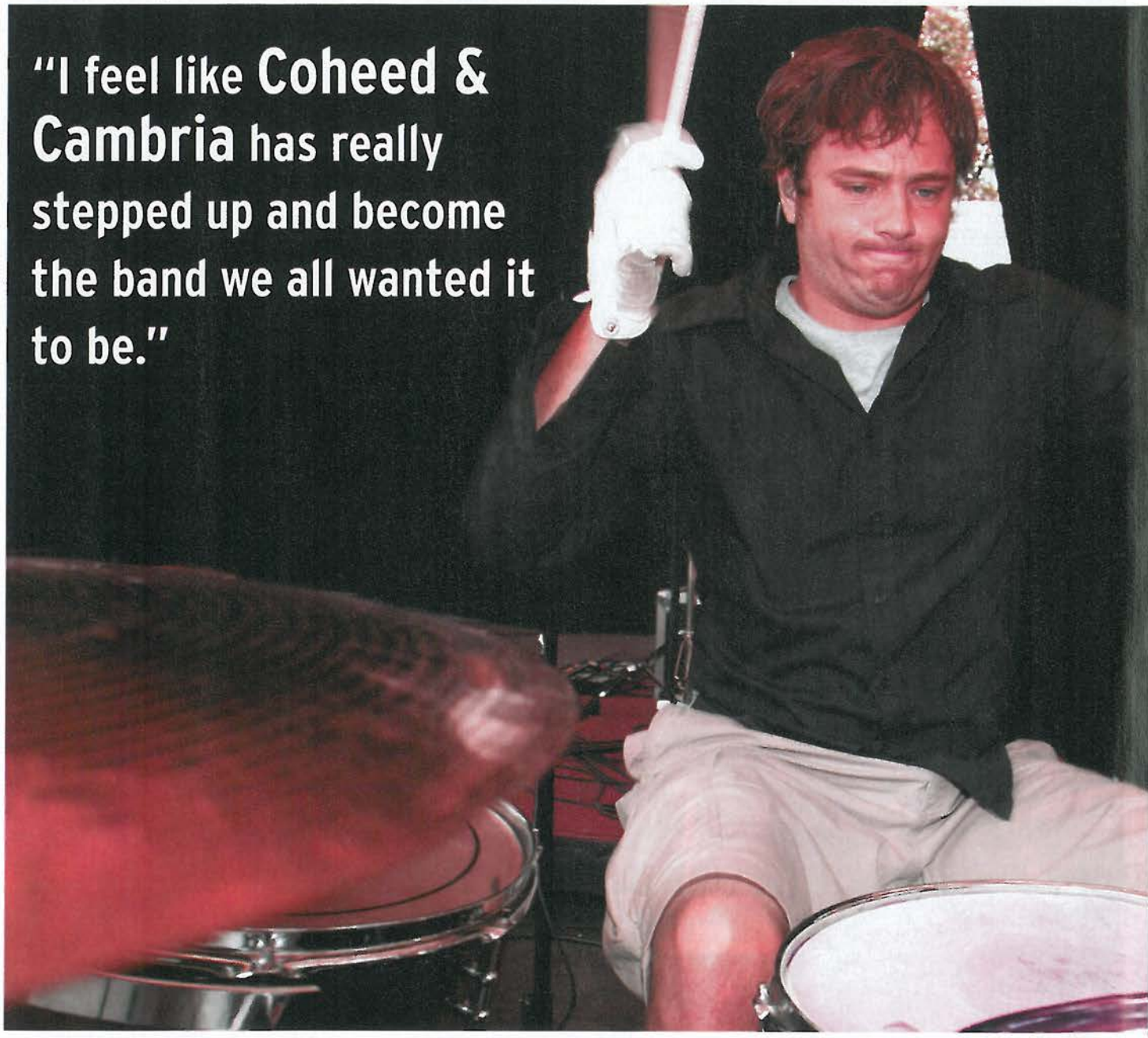
## For Prog's Sake



"I don't think anyone is going to enjoy a song if it's just four dudes jerking off all the time," states Eppard. "I feel like we have a pretty good sense of that, and I call that professionalism. I call it growing up and being a real player who enjoys the songs that you're being a part of. I wouldn't want to do anything to take away from a song. We have our little times where it's too much, but it's the whole band being too much. It's not, 'Man, that vocal melody is really great but that damn drummer won't shut up with those fills.' I hear drumming like that on songs all the time—and when I was fourteen years old I did fills every four measures, too."

Eppard shakes his head. "I call it *professionalism*," he repeats. "Mic and I understand that guitars are exciting. Drums are exciting, too, but when [Sanchez and Stever are] doing a solo, that doesn't mean Mic and I have to start soloing. Yes, there are busy parts in our music. There's a part on the new record that I feel might be a little too much. But the song is so over the top, I think it's okay."

Spinning through any of Coheed & Cambria's three releases—*The Second Stage Turbine Blade* from 2002, the 2003 release *In Keeping Secrets Of Silent Earth: 3*, and the latest, *Good Apollo, I'm Burning Star IV: Volume 1, From Fear Through The Eyes Of Madness*—it becomes clear that Eppard and his bandmates rely more on subtle accents than heavy-handed parts. That's by design.



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- **B.** 8x10 rack tom
- **C.** 16x15 floor tom (mounted)
- **D.** 20x22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Sabian
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2. 20" Chinese
3. 8" splash
4. 20" Paragon ride
5. 20" crash

**Heads:** Remo coated Emperor on snare batter, Pinstripes on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, Evans EMAD on bass drum batter with C&C Custom logo head on front

**Sticks:** Vic Firth 5B wood tip

**Microphones (live):** Shure SM57 on snare, Sennheiser 604s on toms, Shure 52 and 91 on kick, and Neumann KM184 for overheads

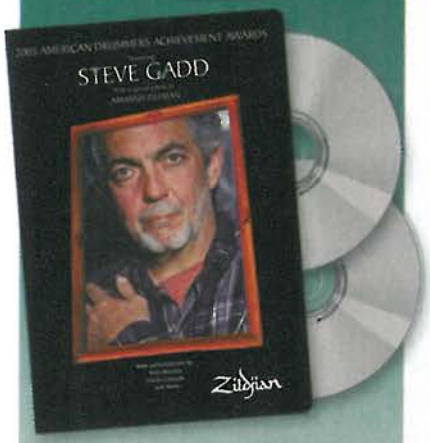
"We enjoy the subtleties," Eppard says, "which is probably a funny thing coming from a guy playing in a band called Coheed & Cambria, with the saga and the story. That's very pretentious. I think Mic and I enjoy the more subtle things about playing music, like maybe a little open hi-hat thing in the second verse that some musicians might hear and say, 'That's slick.'"

More than anything, Eppard reports, the ability to pull off the slightest accent comes because of the chemistry he has with bassist Todd. "I would like to tell you that we sit down and think that stuff out, but we don't," Josh insists. "It just happens. We're really in the same headspace. We look at each other and know what we're doing. We just do things and then laugh. We'll be on stage in front of 3,000 people, laughing, because he's back by me and we get in each other's heads."

Certainly chemistry plays a crucial part in the Eppard-Todd relationship, but it doesn't hurt that the entire band had some time to rehearse before they went in to record *Good Apollo*. "When we went in for *In Keeping Secrets,* we learned a song in the morning and recorded it that afternoon," Eppard admits. "That was a challenge, because these aren't three-minute pop songs. It's not verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-double chorus-out. Some of these songs have messed-up arrangements."

In fact, the band had a month of rehearsal this time around. "We recorded every

HUDSON MUSIC

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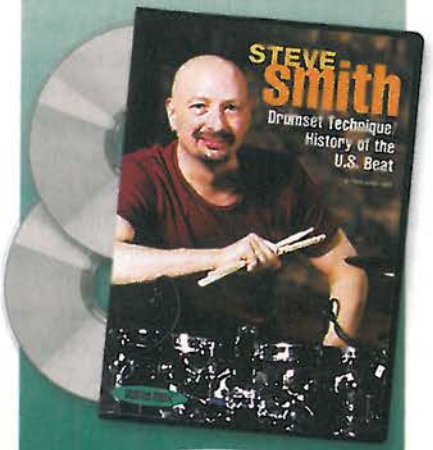


HUDSON MUSIC

## Josh Eppard

rehearsal and really prepared to go make the record we wanted to make," Eppard says. "That had a huge, huge impact, even for stamina. When you're playing for eight hours a day, every day, it got to a point where it was no sweat and we were never tired. When we did *In Keeping Secrets,* it was, Get in the studio for a month and make a record. This time we took some time off and practiced them. I knew the songs. Every time I listen to *In Keeping Secrets,* I think, 'Damn, if I knew that song better I would have played something different.'

"'A Favor House Atlantic' is a perfect example," he continues, "where it goes straight and Travis plays [mimics fast notes from the guitar player]. I mix it up now when we play live. Kids come up to me and say that they love what I did. I'm like, 'You even noticed that?' But it's those things that make a band a band."

**"Honest to God, we enjoy playing things that are a little challenging."**

More than music, though, the time in rehearsal provided Coheed & Cambria with time to reconnect. "I think the main thing was the four of us getting together in a room together again," Josh states, "without managers and not in front of thousands of people. It was just four dudes again, and it was like going home after not being there for three years. It was great, touching and beautiful. We put these songs together as a band. Everyone had ideas for all of the prog stuff. We put our heads together, laughed, and it was fun. Even some of the straighter songs are fun to do, because I think they're great songs. I feel like Coheed & Cambria has really stepped up and become the band we all wanted it to be."

One of the things that has changed for Coheed & Cambria on *Good Apollo* is a tighter sound that Eppard believes is reminiscent of The Police circa *Synchronicity*. The sound—based on a tighter snare and hi-hats, as well as palm-muted guitar and bass parts—is most obvious on the songs "The Lying Lies And Dirty Secrets Of Miss Erica Court," "Mother May I," "Fuel For Feeding End," and "Once Upon Your Dead Body." "It's not sucked-up, half-volume, just sucked-up where the hats aren't open and really tight," Eppard explains. "That was something we had been doing more and more. I think it's because we're getting better and can play that way instead of masking it with a lot of open chords and a lot of smashing cymbals."

Eppard sees this more as an evolution than something new, so it doesn't necessarily change the way he came up with parts for this batch of songs. "It does change the way it works when the hi-hats aren't open," he says. "Obviously when the hi-hats are closed, it lends itself to do some tastier hi-hat licks and whatnot, but I never really thought of it as changing. We incorporate so many different styles in our music and have such an eclectic mix of influences. I'm always drawing from a different place, no matter what we're doing. I never thought of it as changing, it's always a new challenge for us. And, honest to God, we enjoy playing things that are a little challenging."

More than tighter hi-hats, these "sucked-up" songs push Eppard to play off-kilter grooves. "Yeah, the groove is weird, but it feels natural," he says, especially regarding the song "Mother May I." "That's what Mic and I try to do, even if it's super weird and very off-kilter. We try to make 7/8 or whatever it is feel like 4/4. I love that groove, and in the choruses it's more of a sucked-up feel, which lends itself to all

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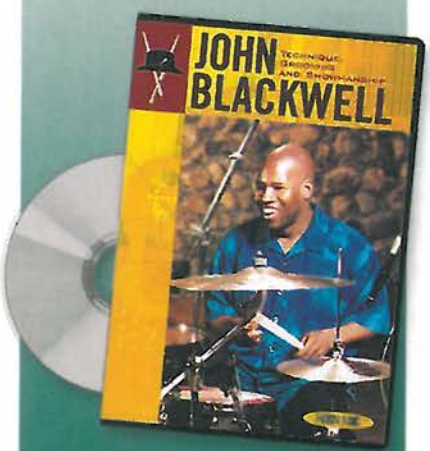



HUDSON MUSIC

# Josh Eppard

kinds of things when you open it up to have the same power as a heavy metal song."

Another facet of the Coheed & Cambria sonic evolution comes with the song "Wake Up," the band's first ballad. For Eppard, playing a more straight-ahead song was one of the more challenging moments during the recording sessions. "Sometimes the easiest songs are the hardest to nail," he says. "There's a lot of space to screw up, even with a click and a grid. There's a lot of space to have it not feel good. That can be hard. But I love that song.

"We listened to that song in Europe with Matt Pinfield, our A&R rep, and our manager, and they were crying. I was touched, man. It's a beautiful song. When I first heard it, I was like, 'Man, I want to be a part of this tune, but does it even need drums?' That was intimidating and a big challenge, for sure. That said, I think we nailed it."

Eppard was thinking of Ringo Starr when it came time to track the drums for that song. "Kind of a little sloppy, but keeping the groove there," he says. "That's all it needed. It was so challenging, because it's so out of left field for this band to do. I'll tell you, I'm proud of myself for being on that song and stepping up."

After tracking and listening back, the band and producers discovered that Eppard had provided ghost notes that pushed the song to new heights. "It's very natural for me to play ghost notes," the drummer admits, "but if I think about it too much I can't do it. There are a lot of ghost notes in my playing, but not like in a Mitch Mitchell way. I realize that I'm doing it, and I use it to deepen the groove and add some nice color.

"I don't see how anyone can play without ghost notes," Josh continues. "A lot of times in a straight-ahead rock thing, you don't want to hear the ghost notes. But I feel that in 'Wake Up' they really carry the groove."

The new sounds that Eppard developed and discovered on "Wake Up" came after the drummer received the news that he had developed tendinitis in his wrists while the band was touring behind *In Keeping Secrets*. That news pushed him to practice and relearn the rudiments of drumming. "Now, for the first time in my life, I sit

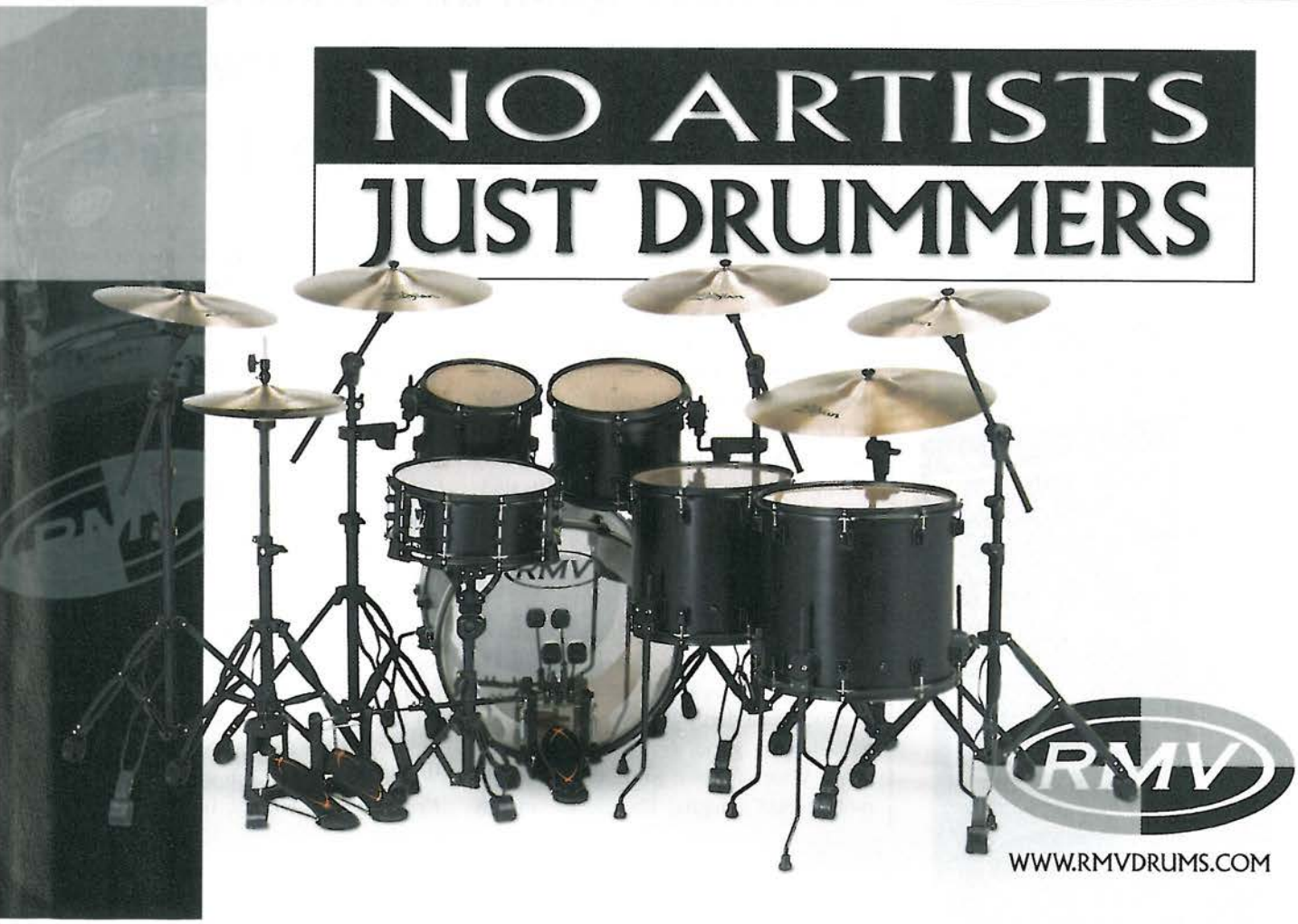
down every day with a pad and work on my hands, carefully building my technique and warming up," Eppard admits. "My wrists are better than ever. But I've learned that I have to do this, because if I let them get stiff the tendinitis will come back and mess up my playing. And besides, I like to sit home and practice my rudiments, which I never really did before. I mean, I did it before, but not at the same intensity I do it now."

During his more intense practice sessions, Eppard started listening to drummer Jerry Marotta, who has become a big influence. "No one really plays like him—very ethnic, with a lot of drums and not a lot of cymbals," Josh says. "That's been my approach recently, and it's re-motivated me and inspired me, because it's different." Speaking of different, Eppard plays in an open-handed style, meaning he leads and plays ride rhythms with his left hand.

The sessions to record "Wake Up" was one of the few times that Eppard added to his basic four-piece C&C Custom drumkit. "In that song there are two separate snare drums," he reports, "a super deep one and then another one that was slightly detuned, very earthy—a real rock 'n' roll sound, which kind of didn't come out in the mix. The head was so soft on the detuned one, it was wrinkled. I only hit it about four times." Then on the song "Fear Through The Eyes Of Madness," a second, larger floor tom was added to his kit. "Between you and me, I don't think I ever hit that second floor tom," he admits with a laugh.

"I like to think that if I need to I can make a four-piece set sound like a ten-piece," he says. "That idea has always appealed to me. I always dug drummers that had smaller drums and smaller kits and made them sound enormous. I was never into the huge heavy metal ten-piece drumset. It just never appealed to me."

That "keep it simple" approach spreads to his choice of a single pedal, although

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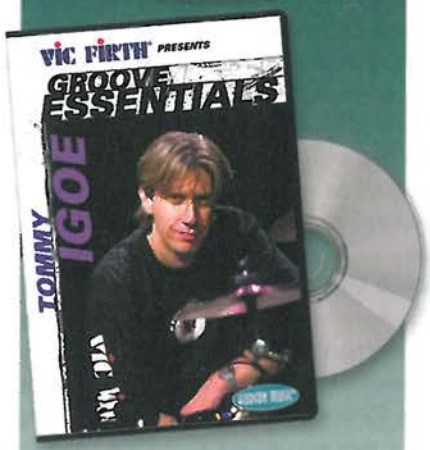


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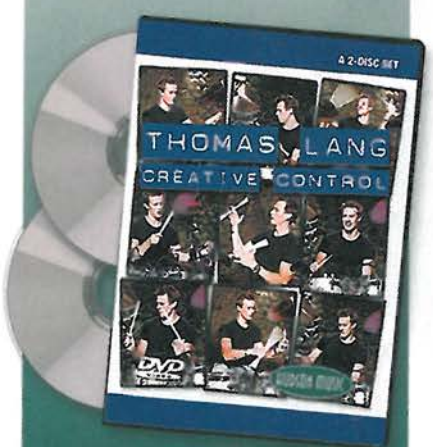


HUDSON MUSIC

## Josh Eppard

many find it hard to believe after listening to such songs as "The Crowing" from *In Keeping Secrets* and "Fuel For The Feeding End" on *Good Apollo* that Eppard doesn't use a double pedal. "People don't believe that I only use a single pedal on 'The Crowing' or 'Fuel For The Feeding End.' It's just something that I was good at. When you're young you want to do something that you're good at because it feels good to do it. I just feel very comfortable with my bass drum foot. It's always been the mainstay of what I really enjoy about playing drums.

"I play heel-up," Josh continues, "and I think that has a lot to do with it. I had a fast foot growing up, but incorporating it into fills took some work and practice. I'd hear a fill in my head and would practice it. With all the playing that the band has done over the past couple of years, my foot has just gotten faster and faster."

The recent spate of practicing that Eppard's been doing is making him feel more comfortable *across* the kit. "With all of the practicing I've been doing on my hands with things like rudiments and really getting into the art of the hands, I'm starting to really enjoy the top of the kit. My whole life I've enjoyed my foot the most, but that's changing the better my hands and wrists get."

Speaking of his hands, Eppard has taken to wearing gloves while playing. "I used to think that gloves look super cheesy," he admits, "but I don't give a hoot now. I just want to play good, so I'm going to wear them. What are they going to do, call me more geeky? [laughs] The gloves virtually eliminate the problem of sweating. Sometimes my hands would be sweating so much that I'd have to grip the sticks too tightly, which can damage your hands and wrists. With gloves, that's no longer a problem."

Eppard takes the same approach in the studio. "I can hit the drums harder and longer with them," he says. "My hands feel better, too. It's not about blisters, it's more about feeling comfortable."

Throughout the *Good Apollo* sessions and live dates Eppard has had a chance to channel the influences of Stewart Copeland and Ringo Starr into his playing. At the same time, he reports that he often thinks of John Bonham, Greg Errico [Sly & The Family Stone], and Stevie Wonder for their own brand of groove and feel. (While those influences may not be as obvious in his work with Coheed & Cambria, Eppard has had a chance to show a whole different side of his playing while performing under the nom de plume Weerd Science, a hip-hop outfit that released its debut, *Friends And Nervous Breakdowns,* earlier this year.)

**"We incorporate so many different styles in our music and have such an eclectic mix of influences. I'm always drawing from a different place."**

A few weeks before the band hit The Casbah in San Diego, they'd started playing a series of dates called "An Evening With Coheed & Cambria," where a full electric set was preceded by an acoustic set. "The show in Chicago was one of the top-five moments in my life," Eppard reports. "It was amazing, but you couldn't hear the band playing during the acoustic set because of all the kids singing. I was right up front, and everyone was singing. We played '2113' [an epic song from *In Keeping Secrets*], the first time we ever

played it live. When we started out, everyone in the audience was bugging out, because they couldn't believe they were going to hear the song. Then we did an electric set later, and we smoked it. The band has never sounded better."

In addition to their musicianship, Eppard has seen a change in the band's live performance thanks to the use of personal ear monitors. "I was dreading using them, because I always heard stories," the drummer shares. "But it was never drummers complaining. It was always singers or guitar players. When we started using them, I could really hear the band. Frankly, now I don't even feel like I'm playing. I feel like I'm listening to a record. It's awesome."

So far Josh doesn't miss having the punch of a monitor behind him. "No way," he urges. "I've got my kick drum nice and punchy in there [points to ears]. I like the kick to sound [knocks on wood] when I play live. It's hard to judge the tempo when it's washed out."

Back at the hotel hours before the band is set to hit the stage, Eppard has just finished listening to some of the *Good Apollo* rough mixes on an iPod. He's pleased, not just with his parts, but with the way the entire album of fifteen songs hangs together and sounds interesting. There are many tiers, he explains, to making interesting music, and it all starts with songwriting. "There are a lot of great bands that can play their assess off but who don't have *songs*. If a song sucks, nobody is going to listen to it, whether it's two minutes long or ten minutes. Not to say that our songs are the greatest, but apparently some people like 'em. Next, the song has got to be played well. I'm not going to call out any names, but sometimes I hear a record and the drums are so awful that I can't believe it's out in the stores. Are you kidding me? That's bad playing.

"We've got to keep it interesting for us and the fans," Eppard concludes. "I don't want to be bored. I don't think eight minutes of the same part is that interesting. Not consciously, but I think the four of us have thought, 'Let's not fall in love with ourselves here, let's keep this interesting.' That said, our music is as much for our fans as it is for us. We try to come up with great parts and play them well, and hopefully people dig the songs as much as we do."


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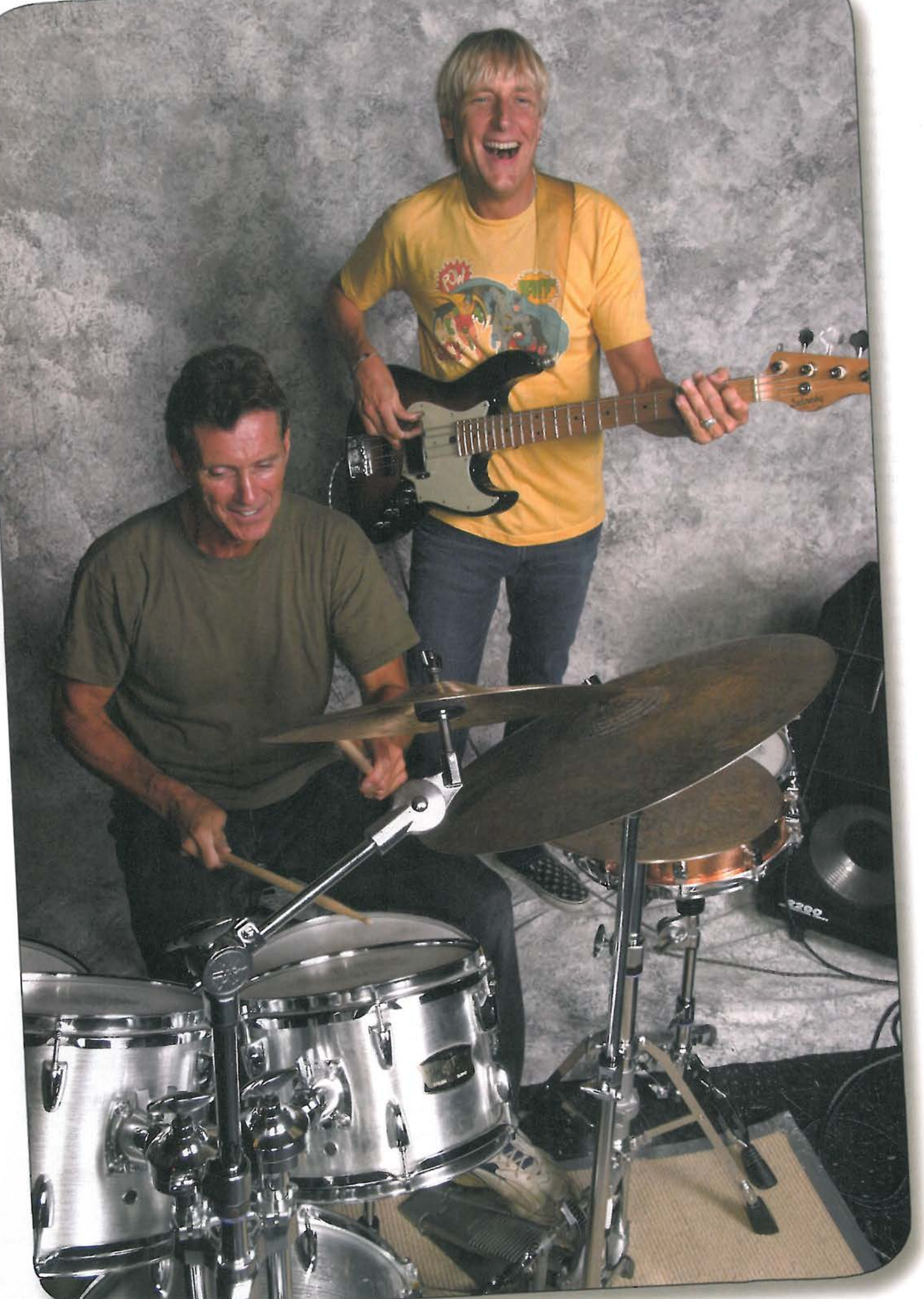
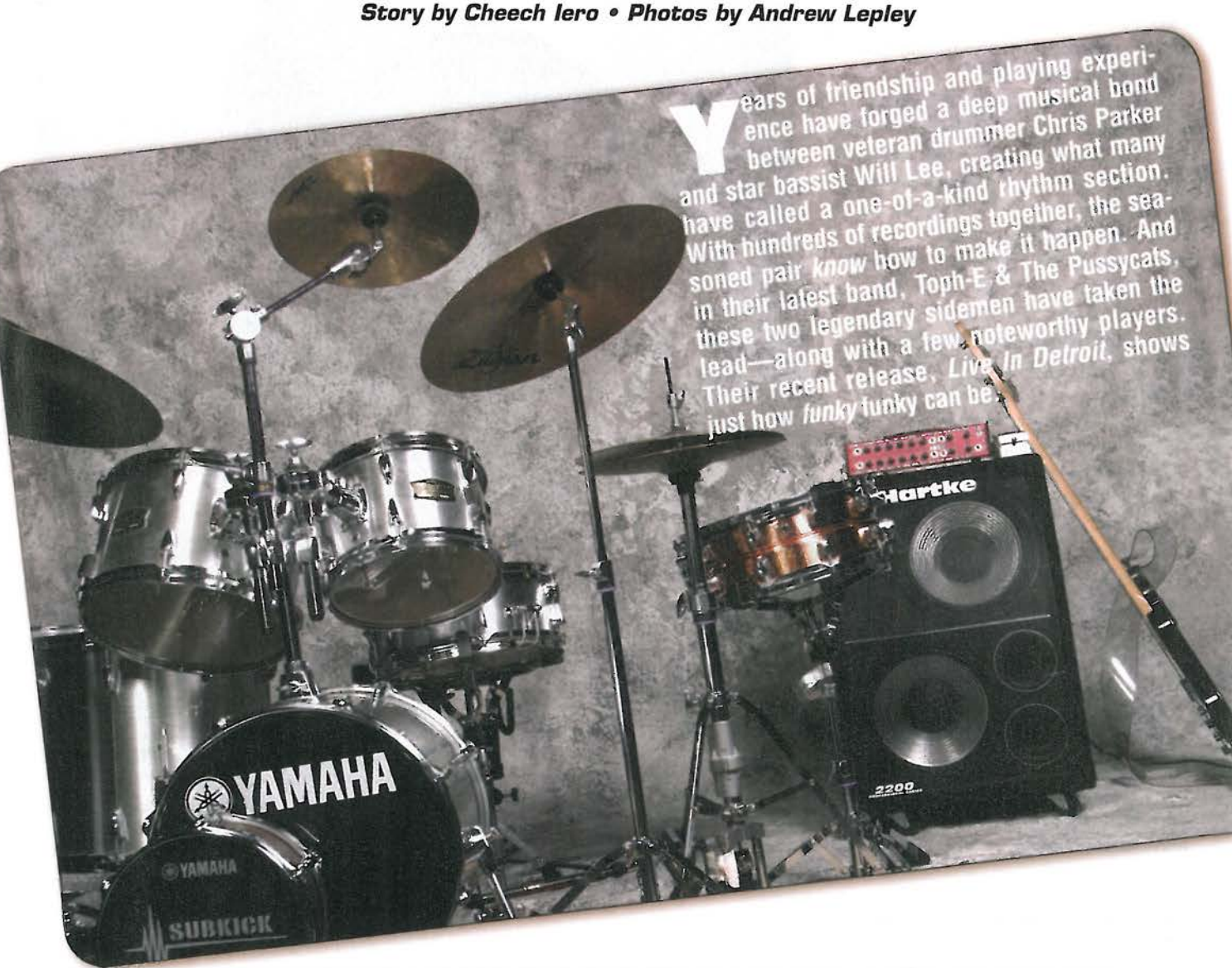


# Chris Parker & Will Lee

## Inside The Ultimate Rhythm Section

***Story by Cheech Iero • Photos by Andrew Lepley***




Years of friendship and playing experience have forged a deep musical bond between veteran drummer Chris Parker and star bassist Will Lee, creating what many have called a one-of-a-kind rhythm section. With hundreds of recordings together, the seasoned pair *know* how to make it happen. And in their latest band, Toph-E & The Pussycats, these two legendary sidemen have taken the lead—along with a few noteworthy players. Their recent release, *Live In Detroit*, shows just how *funky* funky can be.

Parker and Lee met when they were in their early twenties back in 1973, after Will moved to New York from Miami. Chris was living in Woodstock, New York at the time and had a Gospel/R&B band called The Crawfords. The bass player in the band flaked out, and Chris needed someone to fill in for a weekend gig at a club called Joyous Lake.

During that time, Will was dating Ellen, the sister of Chris's girlfriend. After learning Chris was hung up for a bassist, Ellen mentioned she knew a guy who was a really good bass player and had recently arrived from Miami. Chris asked for his telephone number, called, and Will made the gig. Parker recalls, "From the very first note it was, 'Wow, *this* is what I've been looking for.' Will was right there on every feel, every beat, every passing tone. He just knew where I was going and what I was going to do when I was going to do it. There were a couple of interesting charts, if I remember correctly. But you couldn't throw Will. He knew it all. He had the feel. I grinned the whole night. That was the beginning of our relationship—our musical and personal relationship."

"My first Chris Parker experience was amazingly beautiful," Will Lee remembers. "We counted it off, Chris started to play, and it was the first time I ever got the feeling of rolling, like being on top of a big wheel or on a set of wheels. Chris's time reminded me of a big round groove, a circular groove that just rolled. I found it so easy to play with him. Immediately, I was ready to play with Chris forever."

Will suggested that Chris move to Manhattan, where the pace was more intense. "I'd been in Woodstock already for four years," Parker says. "I was a big fish in a very small pond. I was doing whatever studio dates there were to do, whether it was Rick Danko, Bonnie Raitt, or Paul Butterfield."

Parker eventually did make the move to Manhattan during the summer of 1974. The address was 70 Carmine Street, which is where Will lived on the first floor, singer Margaret Dorn and her boyfriend, Danny Morouse, resided on the second floor, and Don Grolnick had an apartment on the fourth floor. Chris took the apartment on the third floor. "It was one big musical community," Parker smiles. "We played all of the time."

"Back in those days people jammed a lot," Will states. "It was *great*. I don't know what the deal is with people these days. No one gets together to play except to work. It's like an every-man-for-himself kind of thing—a typical New York vibe. New York is one of the most difficult towns to have a band in because every man is literally for himself, trying to make that nut, that monthly rent. It's about not only the gig you're doing now, but looking at your watch to see how fast you can get to your *next* gig.

"I think the hippie, brotherly concept of those days allowed us to get together as often as we did," Will continues. "Plus, nobody had any gigs anyway. It was a great time."

"We formed The Carmine Street Band," Parker recalls, "which featured Will, Don Grolnick, Steve Kahn, and me. We rehearsed at Don's apartment, which was tiny. Eventually Mike and Randy Brecker started to come in, and David Sanborn as well. That actually became the nucleus of

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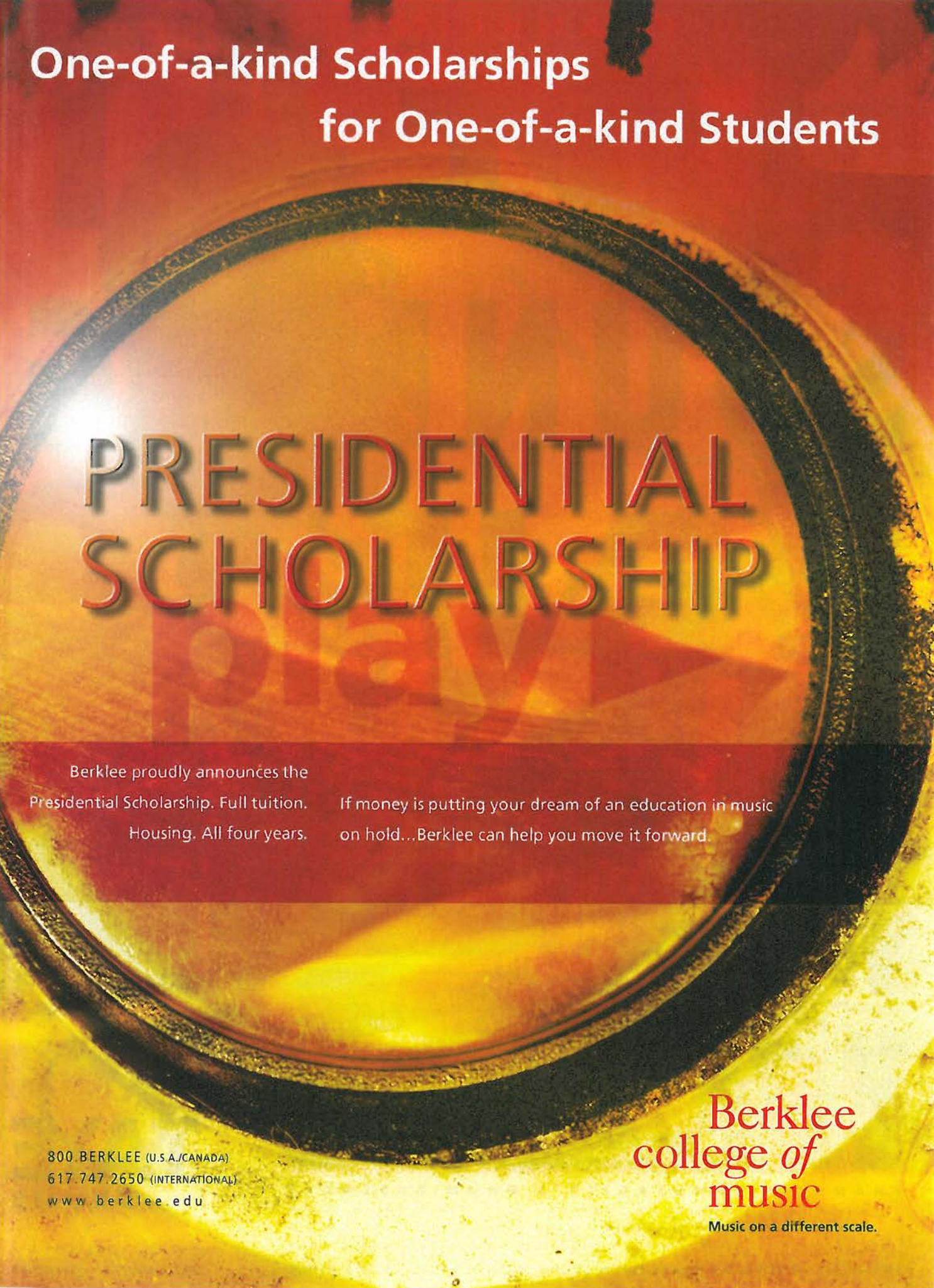


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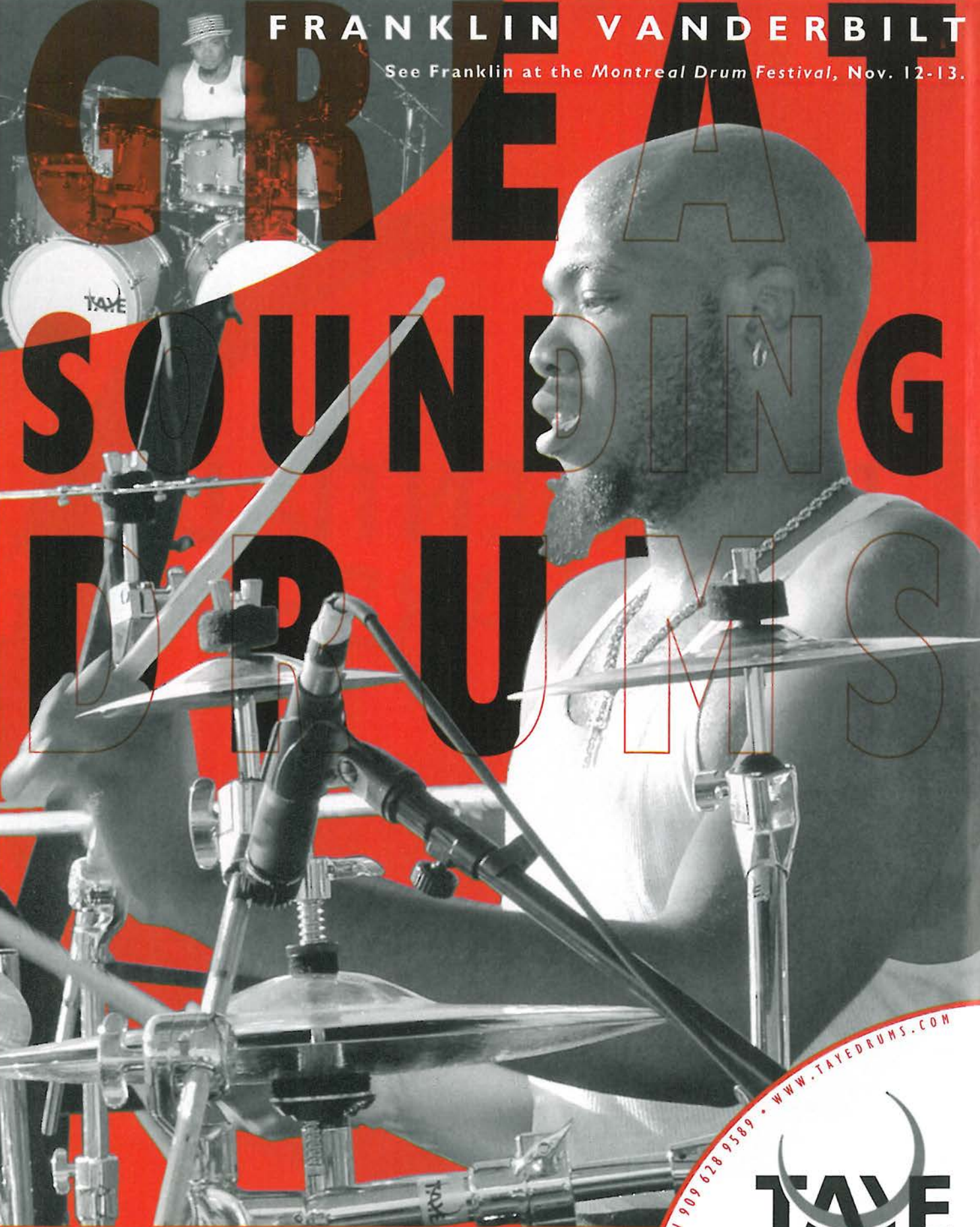


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the Brecker Brothers Band. We had seven pieces, three horns and four rhythm instruments, rehearsing in that little apartment. It was like, I'm going to play on the bell of the cymbal, could you please move back a little."

"Oh man, with that three-piece horn section, it was *crowded*," Lee exclaims. "But it was definitely a musical place."

"Eventually we decided that we needed more space," Chris continues. "So we got a loft, a huge thing on Broadway and 4th right around the corner from the Bottom Line. We split the rent. We gave the owner a couple of months advanced rent and started working on the place, fixing it up to suit our needs. But then it turned out that the real estate agent was a crook. He locked the place and we couldn't get back in. It didn't work out, so we moved our separate ways. But we all stayed close musically."

That's an understatement. Parker and Lee went on to record with Esther Phillips, Joe Beck, and David Sanborn, and also recorded the hit "What A Difference A Day Makes." They also did Barry Manilow's "It's A Miracle" and a funky R.B. Greaves song called "That Is Rock 'N' Roll." Another early favorite of theirs is a James Brown hit "Get Up Offa That

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(Chris also uses a Yamaha Maple Custom Vintage kit for recording)

**Cymbals:** Zildjian
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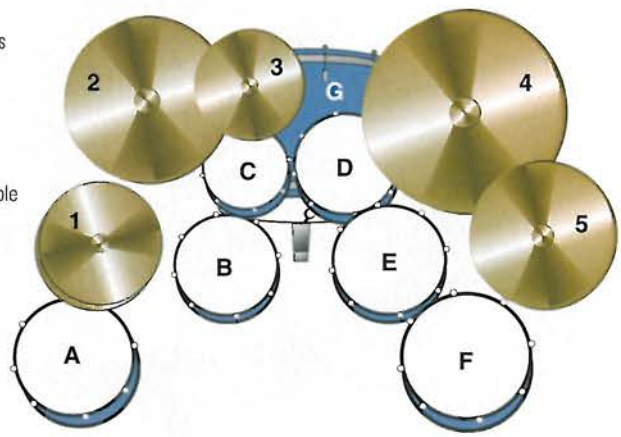
**3.** 12" K Custom Dark splash
**4.** 22" K Constantinople thin ride
**5.** 16" A thin crash

**Hardware:** Yamaha, including a double pedal with medium-loose spring tension

**Heads:** Remo coated Ambassador or Emperor on snare batters, Diplomat snare-side, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Diplomats on bottoms, PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with black Emperor on front (two pages of torn newspaper for muffling)
**Sticks:** Vic Firth Chris Parker 5B model (hickory with wood tip)
**Electronics:** Yamaha 01V mixer and DTXtreme II kit
**Microphones:** Yamaha Subkick, Shure SM57 on snare, Shure A98D on toms, AKG D112 on bass drum, Audio-Technica AT4047 for overheads



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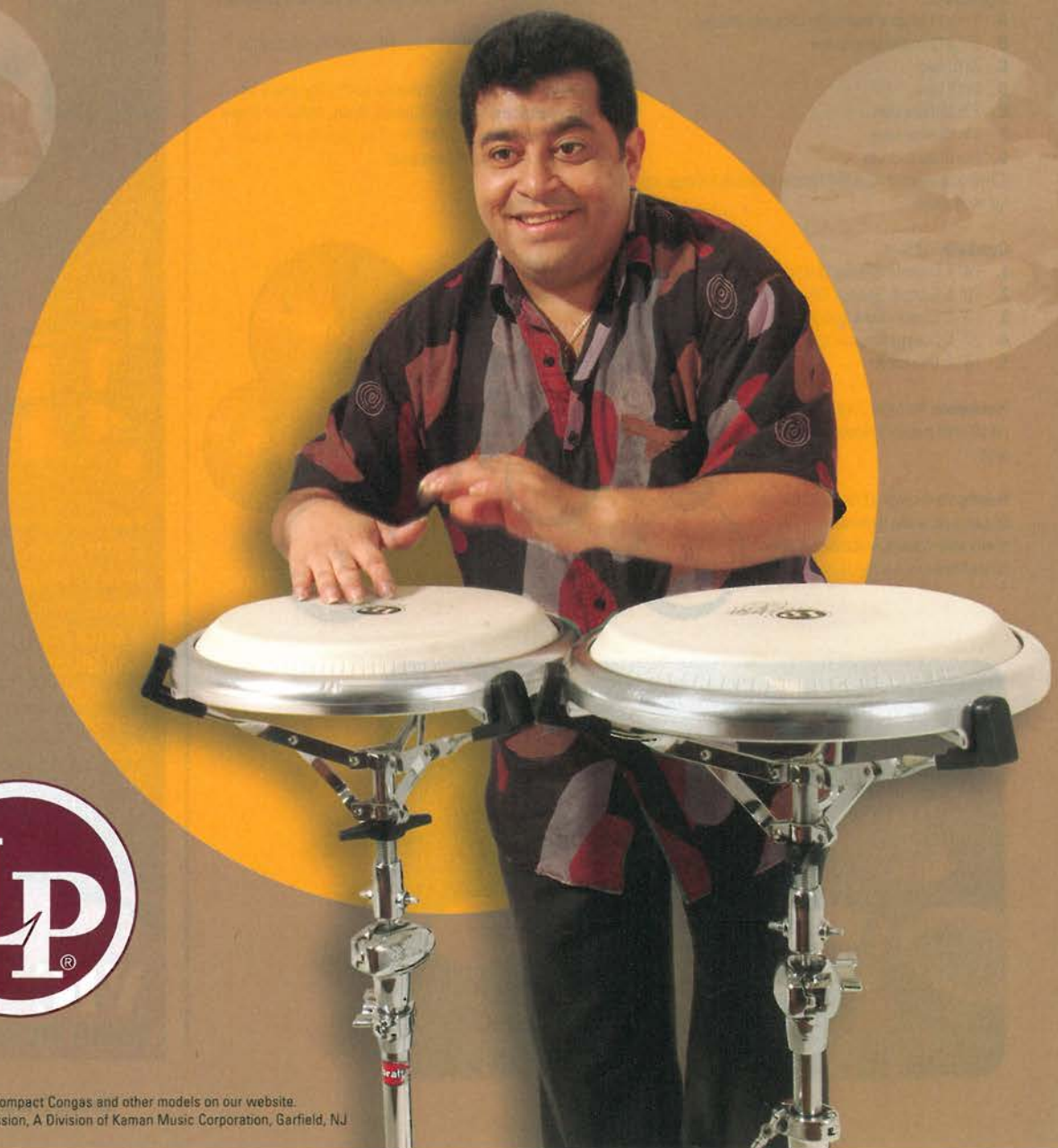

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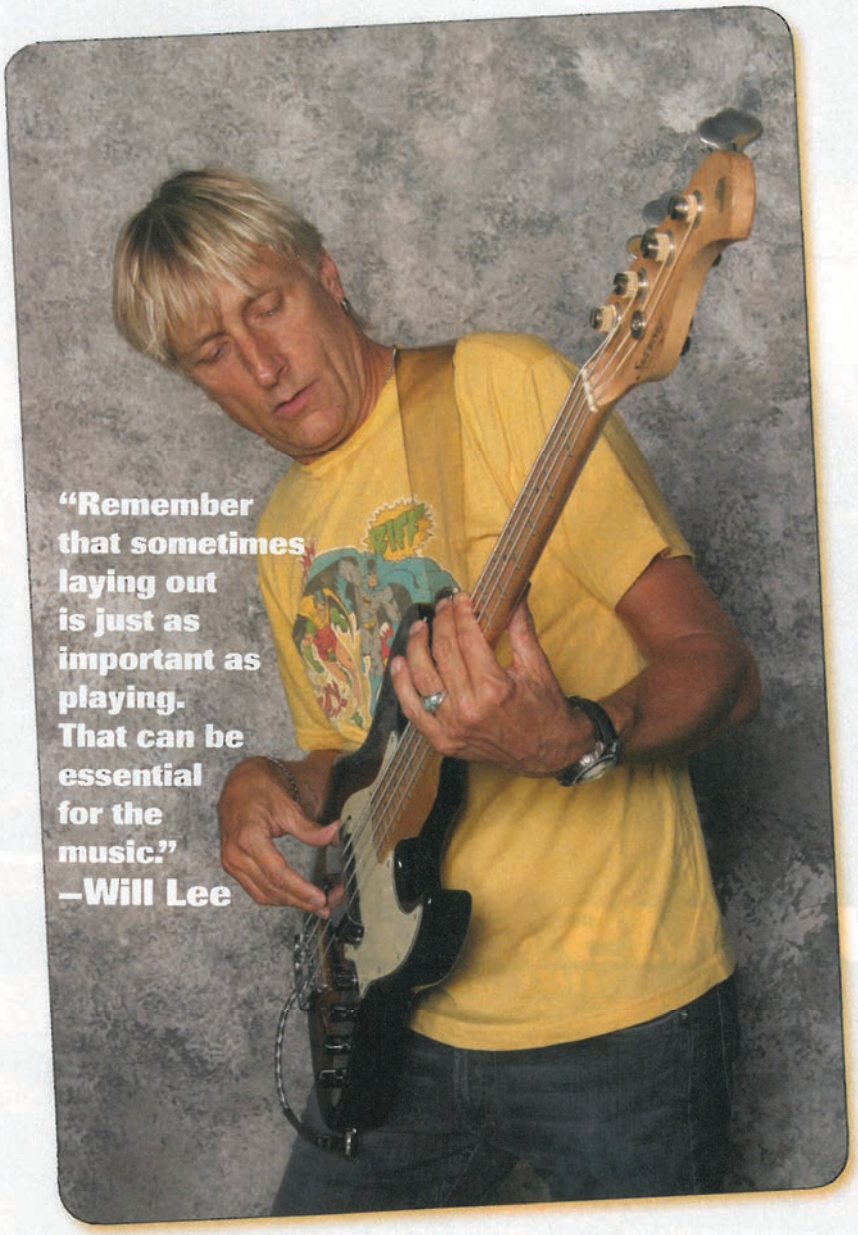
## Parker & Lee

Thing." They did the Brecker Brothers "Sneakin' Up Behind You" and "If You Wanna Boogie...Forget It," which also featured Will's great vocals.

Today, Chris and Will continue to work together in Toph-E & The Pussycats, a project that is gaining recognition as the hippest band to come out of New York since Stuff. The name of the group came from Will, who has always called the drummer "Toph" or "Tophe," a shortened version of Christopher. Founded in 2000, the group consists of well-respected musicians who have a love for rhythm & blues, but played in an experimental jazz context.

Check out the credentials of the individual members of Toph-E & The Pussycats: Chris Parker, drums, has been a member of The Brecker Brothers, Stuff, Joe Cook, and NBC's *Saturday Night Live*. He's toured with Bob Dylan, Bette Midler, Joe Cocker, and Paul Simon: Parker has recorded with Donald Fagen, Ashford & Simpson, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, James Brown, Salt 'N' Pepa, Miles Davis, and Cher.

Will Lee, bass and vocals, is best known for being a member of the house band on *The Late Show With David Letterman* on CBS. He's also a member of The Fab Faux, one of the world's best Beatles tribute bands. Will has also performed on recordings with Frank Sinatra, Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand, Mick Jagger, Steely Dan, and James Brown.

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## Parker & Lee

Ralph MacDonald, percussionist and Grammy-winning songwriter, is also in Toph-E & The Pussycats. He started with Harry Belafonte when he was only sixteen years old and went on to have hit records of his songs recorded by Bill Withers ("Just The Two Of Us"), Donny Hathaway and Roberta Flack ("Where Is The Love"), and Grover Washington ("Mister Magic"). Since then MacDonald has performed on countless recordings with artists like George Benson, Tom Scott, and Jimmy Buffett.

Clifford Carter, piano and keyboards, has been the pianist with Patti Scialfa and the musical director for James Taylor, and has toured or recorded with Bryan Ferry, Betty Buckley, Melissa Errico, and Brethren Crazed Man & The Wildlife Ensemble.

David Mann, tenor and soprano saxophones, has released several solo albums, most recently *Touch* on N-Coded Music. He's produced many artists, including Wayman Tisdale, Nelson Rangell, and Rachel Z. And his recording credits are extensive, including Tower Of Power, James Taylor, Paul Simon, Queen Latifah, Alicia Keys, and Sting.

As you can see, Tophe & The Pussycats has an impressive pedigree. The band's musical direction might be referred to as R&B-bop, since the approach to the material comes from collective jazz, funk, and rhythm & blues influences. "Our omission of a guitar is deliberate," Parker explains. "It's a nod to the great quartets and quintets of Art Blakey, Horace Silver, and Monk. It's also a way to keep the focus on the rhythm section and the interaction between drums, percussion, and bass. Without the additional instrument, there's more solo space for piano and tenor. And the dynamic range is enveloped by the volume limitations of acoustic instruments."

Getting back to Parker and Lee, what in their backgrounds led them to have such impressive careers? Will had a formal music education at the University Of Miami, where he studied French horn for a year before switching to bass. "It was a little too early in time for there to be a Fender bass teacher at the University Of Miami," Will says. "But there was a guy who taught upright bass. Most of the stuff you learn on upright can be applied to Fender, especially in the reading department.

"As timely as it was," Will continues, "after I moved to New York and got my career going nicely, my father, who was the dean of the University Of Miami's School of Music, called and said, 'Hey, I want to introduce the first electric bass department and I want you to be the teacher.' I was like, 'Dad, thanks for the offer, but I'm doing really good in New York and I just don't want to go back to Miami right now.' So who did they get as my replacement? Jaco Pastorius. He was the first electric bass teacher at the University Of Miami."

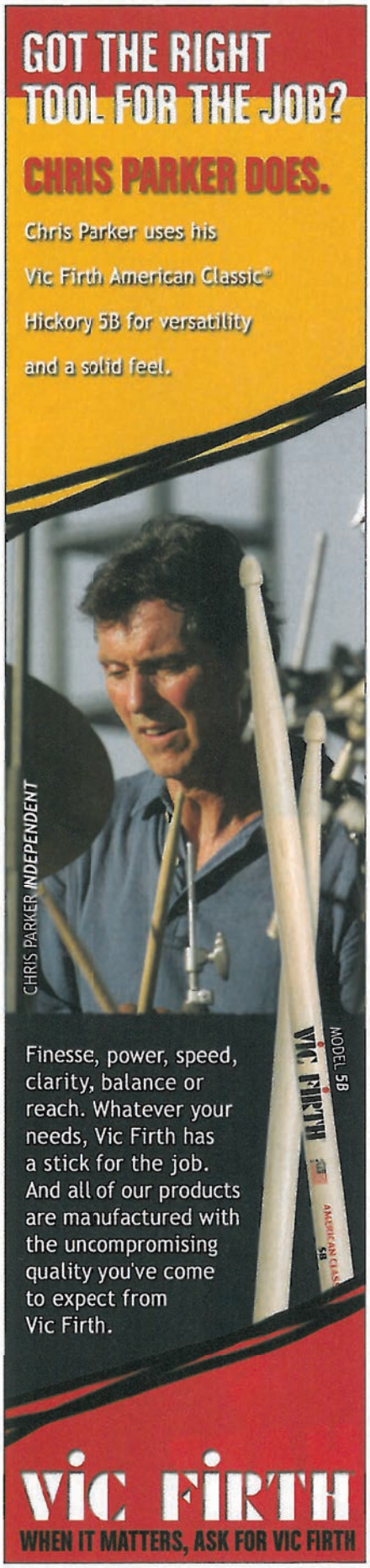
As for Chris Parker, he's attended Juilliard, Mannes, the New School, the School Of Visual Arts, and most recently Western Connecticut University. He studied conducting, composition, and calligraphy at Juilliard, harmony, theory, and piano at Mannes, fine arts at Visual Arts, and music education at Western Connecticut University.

Although Parker hasn't been teaching consistently as of late, incredibly, he does help out the music teacher at his son's high school. Imagine the valuable lessons he's imparting to those kids. "They have a jazz ensemble at the school," Chris says, "and the biggest problem is that their rhythm section wasn't locked in. The drummer and the bass player were in two different worlds, playing too loudly, not grooving, and not listening. I jumped in, 'Stop right there! Play quarter notes on the bass. Just keep hitting the E string. Drummer, play 8th notes on the cymbal, quarter notes on the bass drum, and 2 and 4 on the snare.' They were looking at me like, Why are we doing this? I said, 'Now play this really softly. Anybody can play loud and fast. To play quiet and keep the tempo consistent is much more difficult, yet it's so much more enjoyable to listen to. Play so a listener can't be able to tell the difference between one bar and the next. Make it like a loop.'"

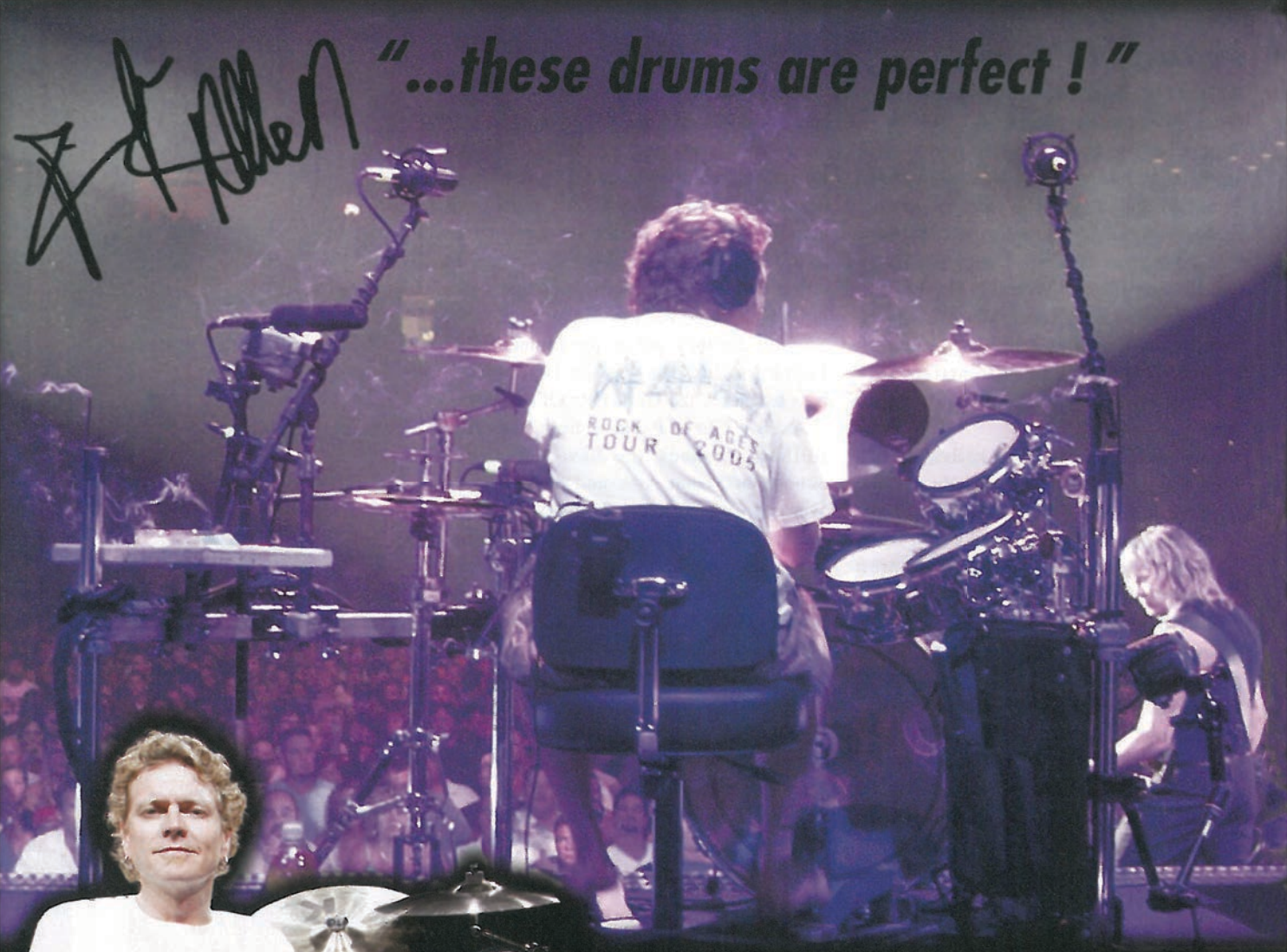
In case you didn't know it, in addition to being a musician, Chris Parker is quite a prolific painter. "My house is filled with Chris Parker paintings," Will admits. "I can't get enough of his art work. He's my favorite painter of all time."

"To me painting and drumming are the same thing," Parker says. "I hear visually and I paint sonically. I imagine setting up a tune's structure in the same way I'd set up a landscape or still life."

Now that we know something about these two men, what are their thoughts on

# "...these drums are perfect !"



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what they feel are the key elements that create a solid rhythm section? According to Will, "I think it's basically everyone being competent enough with what they're playing to have enough brain power left over to listen to what the other musicians are playing—but I mean *really* listen. You have to see the big picture of what's happening. It would also help if everyone agreed on what the actual groove is supposed to feel like, time-wise and feel-wise. Once that's agreed upon, the music is allowed to become unified. That's probably it in a nutshell. Everybody agreeing on what the groove should feel like."

As for Chris Parker's take on it, "The key elements to me are dynamics, a consistent time feel, and acknowledgment of the form. Not playing every eight bars or every four bars, but going from letter A to letter B. The drummer should play a fill, or the bass player should play a fill, or someone should play a fill indicating the change of the section, but the secret is to do it unobtrusively. Do it in a way that doesn't upset the other players and doesn't upset the overall flow of the music. You want to play something that propels the music forward, but doesn't distract from what else is going on.

"I can't emphasize that enough," Parker continues. "The groove, the time feel—how does it lay? Is it pushing you? Is it pulling you back? Is it making you nervous? Is it making you feel relaxed? Any one of those feelings can be the right one at the right time for the right tune. It can be nervous if it's a fusion tune—uppity and aggressive. Whatever you play and try to express emotionally, it still has to be within metronomic time. You can play aggressively with the metronome, you can lay back behind the metronome, or you can divide the beat right down the center.

"Generally, if you stay right with the metronome, you're going to sound a little on top of the beat. The metronome is a machine. Usually what feels good to people is something that's behind the beat just a bit. You know it's the right spot when you see people tapping their feet or rocking in their seats. When you see people rocking, you know the beat feels good to them. And the best possible world is when they get up and *dance*. That is the great thing about playing live."

Does the role of the rhythm section change for you depending upon the genre or music being performed? "Well," Parker says, "the roles may change somewhat depending on radically different styles. But generally, it's the same in any kind of music: The bass player and drummer should be locked together. They're at the bottom of the time feel. The bass player makes changes and the drummer makes the dynamic changes. Everybody should be leaning on them to push the music forward, make it happen, and make it enjoyable to listen to."

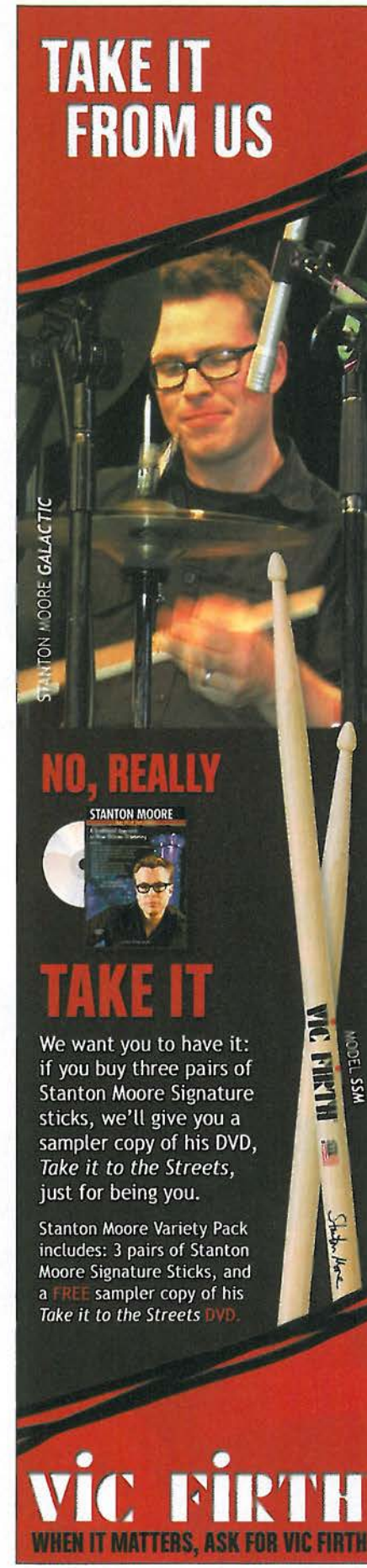
"It can change a lot," Lee adds. "Remember that laying out is just as important as playing sometimes. Not playing is an option, whether it's for a beat or for a whole song. That's essential for the music, and it can really change the shape of the whole picture."

Asking both Parker and Lee about their worst gigs is interesting, as their answers are totally positive. Parker immediately responds, "I don't think I ever played a bad gig. I always tried to find something positive about it. The worst venue might have been Kenny's Castaways on Bleecker Street, or one of those places where they say, 'Don't worry about it. We've got drums for you.' The drums end up being completely beat, with old heads, hardware falling apart, and a bad sound.

"I would make the most of even playing a Broadway show, where you try to keep it fresh after so many performances. I've been in that situation and tried to come up with interesting ideas. You know, playing electronic drums and the same music every night was a challenge. [Parker is referring to his time in the Broadway show *Saturday Night Fever*.] But a gig is a gift, and you must make the most of it."

"To get hired to play music by someone who is willing to give you money *is* a gift," Will adds. "And to go out and get a gig, that's a gift to yourself. I've always admired people who, rather than just wait for the phone to ring, were trying to make things happen. As for me, I think I really cherish every gig. I've gotten a lot of good out of every one."

*For more on Parker, Lee, and Toph-E & The Pussycats, go to www.parkerdrum.com and www.willlee.com.*



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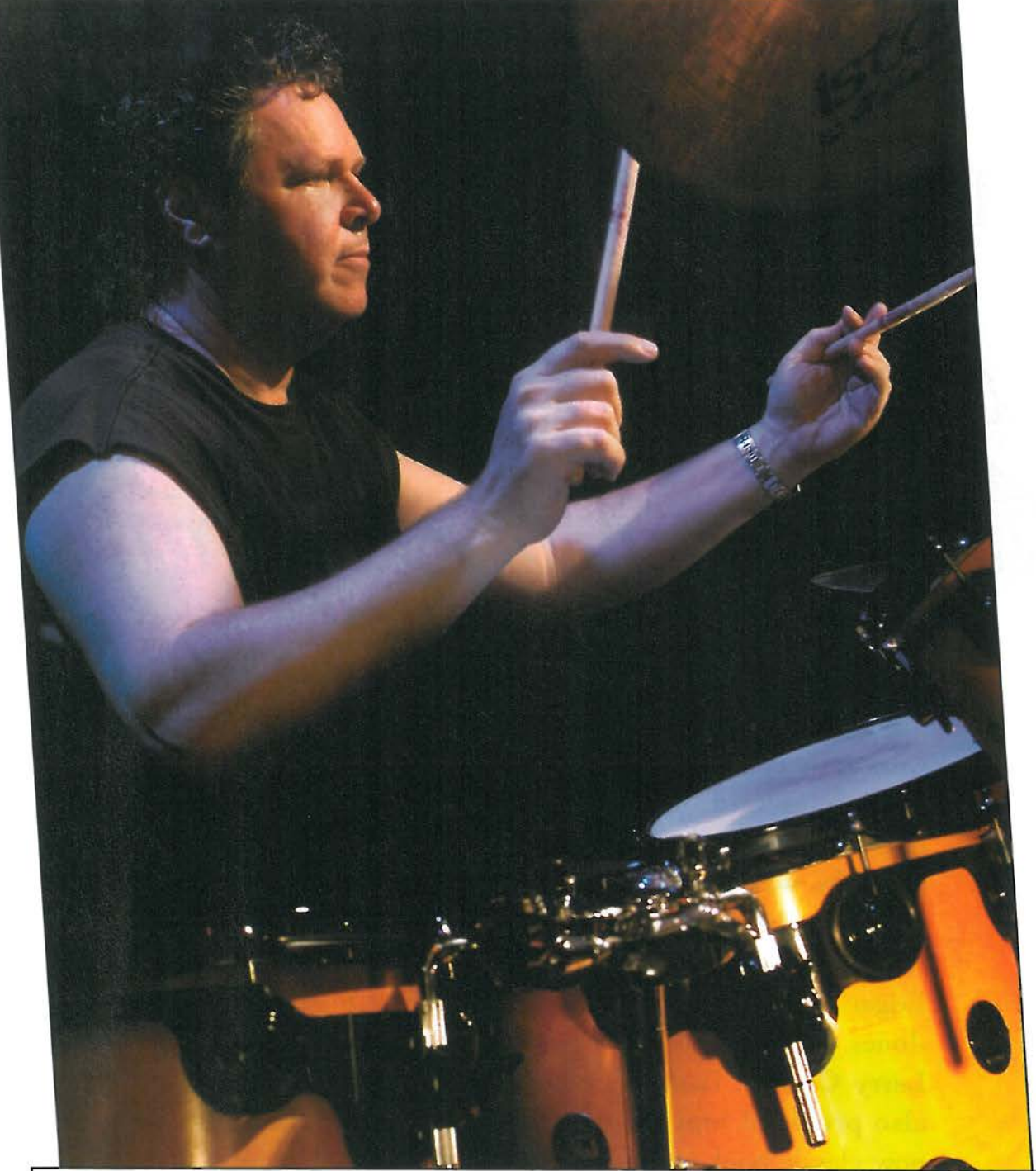
# RICK LATHAM

## Twenty-Five Years Of Funk

**Story by Robyn Flans** **Photos by Alex Solca**

When you talk to journeyman drummer Rick Latham, you realize that everything we do weaves together into one grand tapestry—or as it's sometimes said, one thing definitely leads to another. For Latham, education was invaluable when he was coming up. It taught him variety, which has become his calling card. Rick's worked with a wide range of artists in his career, including Edgar Winter, Chuck Rainey, B.B. King, Quincy Jones, Neal Schon, Pat Travers, Bill Watrous, and Larry Carlton. Latham's educational background also provided him the opportunity to write his now classic book, *Advanced Funk Studies*, as well as *Contemporary Drum Set Techniques*.

To commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Advanced Funk Studies*, Latham has just released the DVD *Rick Latham's Advanced Funk Studies, 25th Anniversary Edition*. It's another solid effort from a fine drummer and a man who many consider to be one of the best clinicians on the planet.



It still blows Latham's mind to think of how he approached drumming legend Louie Bellson at the Remo booth at an early-'80s Texas Music Educators Association convention. When the little-known drummer told Bellson what a big fan he was and introduced himself, Louie said, "I have your book right here." The drumming legend then opened up his briefcase and pulled out a dog-eared copy. He'd obviously been practicing out of it.

Bellson then asked Latham to accompany him to set up his drums for a performance he was giving that evening. "After we did that," Latham says, "Louie invited me back to his room, just so we could keep talking about drums." It's a relationship that has lasted through the years. In fact, Bellson appears on Latham's new DVD, along with fellow drumming great Ed Shaughnessy.

Another time, in the mid-'90s, Latham recalls friend (and studio great) Jim Keltner inviting him to meet Charlie Watts. "Jim told me that they were throwing a party for Charlie at the Drum Doctor's," Rick says, "and he wanted me to go. Well, eventually I approached Charlie at the party and said, 'Hi, I'm Rick Latham, a friend of Jim's. I'm really glad to meet you.' And then he said in his very British accent, 'I know who you are. You have those books and videos out, don't you?' I was amazed and honored that he knew the books. I thought that was really cool.

"After hanging out for a while longer, Keltner said, 'Hey Rick, I'd like to bring Charlie by your place to see you play that hi-hat thing you do.' I was like, 'Wow, what are you saying? You're going to bring Charlie Watts over to my *house*? Right on. Let's go.' I remember looking in my rear view mirror, thinking, 'Holy cow! Jim Keltner and Charlie Watts are following me to my house!' Once we got there, we all went inside, hung out, and, of course, played drums. That was a very memorable afternoon."

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9. 17" thin crash

*not shown in photo

**Percussion:** various Rhythm Tech products, including a cowbell mounted to the bass drum
**Hardware:** DW, including a Turbo 9000 series bass drum pedal (medium-tight spring tension) with Rick Latham Crystal Ball beater
**Heads:** Evans Genera coated on snare drum batter with Hazy snare-side, clear G2s on tops of toms with clear G1s underneath (no muffling), G2 clear on bass drum batter with black G1 on front with 10" hole (blanket or pillow inside)
**Sticks:** Pro-Mark TX717W Rick Latham Autograph model
**Electronics:** Pintech
**Microphones:** Sennheiser

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**MD:** What do you think have been some of the most valuable lessons you've learned along the way?

**Rick:** I started playing when I was twelve—I'll be fifty this year. I was really into rudimental stuff and all the old-school stuff. I grew up when guys were really into technique. The first drum clinic I saw was with Joe Morello, and I was way into Buddy and Louie. Ed Shaughnessy was also a huge influence on me because he was on *The Tonight Show*, and I'd watch him all the time. Later I was able to meet all of them and find out that they studied things like snare drum, timpani, and mallets.

So I started learning timpani and mallets. That made me a better musician and certainly helped me a lot on the drumset. The discipline of marching band and drum corps stuff, which I also was involved in, is invaluable. Then I went to college and studied percussion, and then graduate school. I played in big bands and all sorts of things. I'd play a show in a small town community theater, play with The Four Tops one night, and then be booked at the bar down the street the rest of the week.

I think it's really important that any drummer learns to do a lot of different things and doesn't have blinders on. You should have a broad scope of music. I've always been very open to different situations. There are a lot of schools that drummers can go to now, like Drummers Collective, PIT, LAMA, Berklee, North Texas, University of Miami.... Those are great schools that I recommend. I also say that if you can study with a local teacher or a good local player, if you can find someone you get along with and somebody who gives you a lot of great information, that's invaluable too.

**MD:** Who was that person in your life?

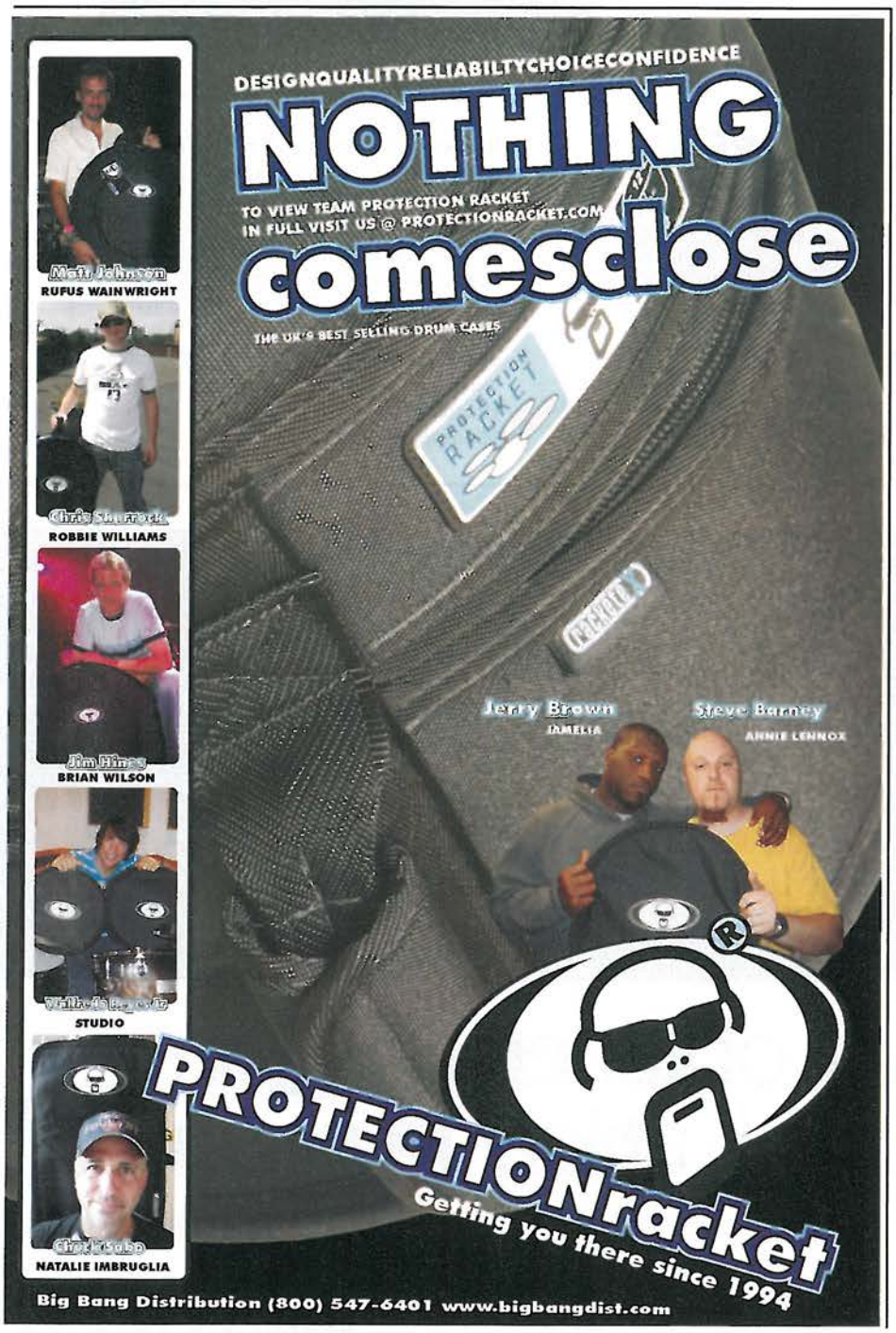
**Rick:** My first teacher was Harold Jones, and he made a huge impression on me. He was my first real instructor in undergraduate school at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. I also had some really good band directors, but they weren't drummers, so they could only show me so much.

When I first got into East Carolina, I was a solid snare drum and drumset player, but Jones had nothing to do with drumset. He was a legit guy—timpani and mallets. He taught me that you should really check these things out because it will make you a much more in-demand player and a better musician. Of course, playing in the wind ensembles in the school orchestra as well as the jazz band was great.

I graduated with a performance degree in percussion, and I was the first percussionist, besides my instructor, to ever win the concerto competition at East Carolina University. It was a competition to perform a famous concerto as a soloist with the university symphony orchestra. I performed the Milhaud Concerto.

**MD:** After that, why did you want to go to graduate school?

**Rick:** I wanted to be a drumset player, even though I started getting work as a percussionist and playing musical theater gigs. But I wanted to be a better drumset player. I had heard a lot about North Texas State University and how the drumset players who came out of there were very good and were landing great gigs. I also heard the school had some great teachers—both drumset and legit. Since I could do both, I applied for a scholarship—a teaching assistantship—and I got it because I could



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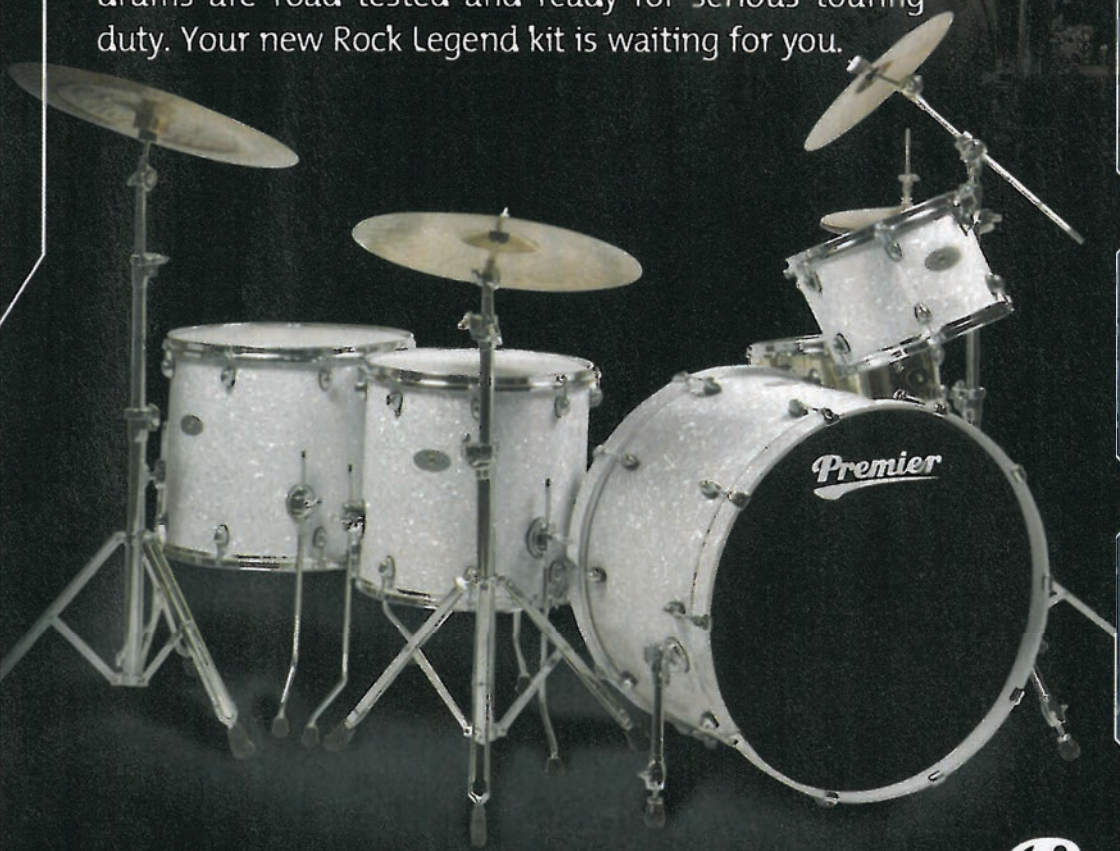

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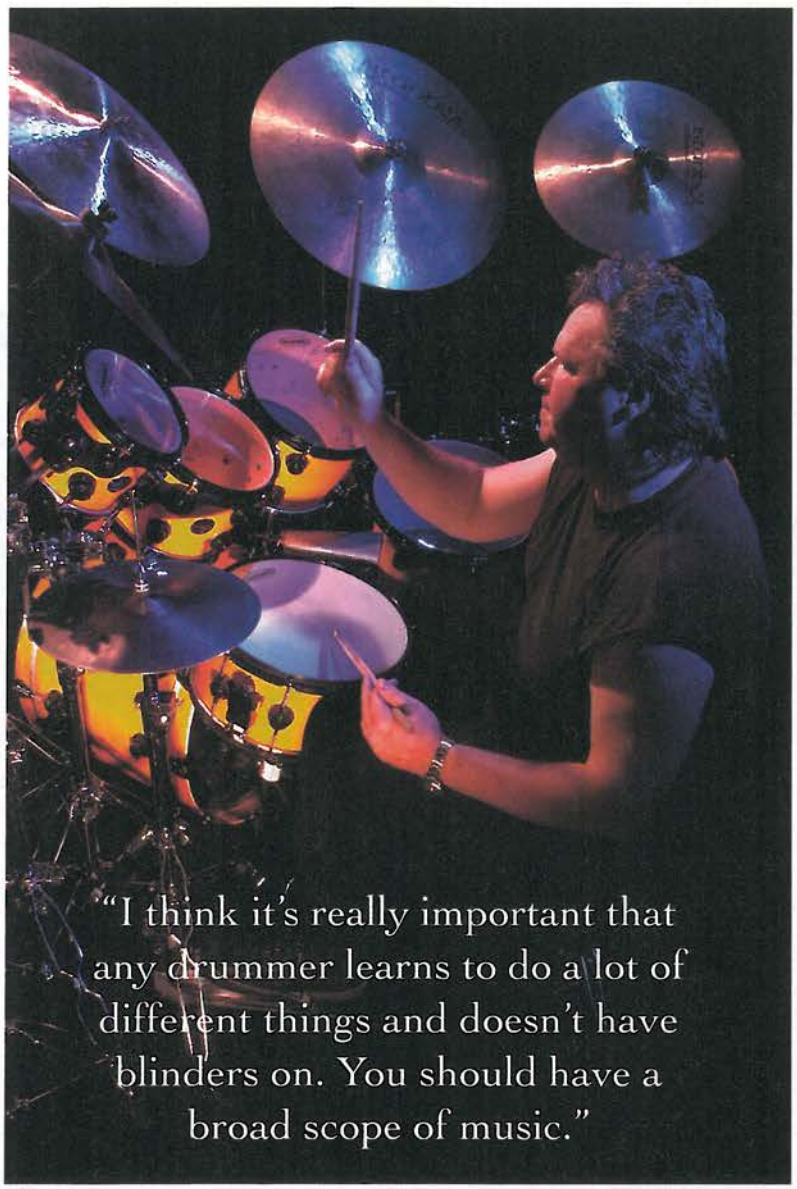
play mallets, timpani, and snare drum as well as drumset. Going to North Texas was a great learning experience for me, and it really helped fine-tune my drumset chops.

**MD:** You've had a lot of training, and I know you do some teaching today when your schedule permits. What would an early lesson consist of?

**Rick:** I think one thing that was important to me that a lot of people miss today is good hand technique, like rudimental stuff. Of course, some people tend to overuse technique once they acquire it. Plus you don't want to turn into a machine with no feel. So I would start a student on technique, particularly the hands, and check out their set work as well. I'd also have them play along to records, which I think is very important to do. I think it can help a drummer develop a good sense of time at an early age.

I also want to say something about embracing technology. The industry has changed so much. Staying up with the latest technology can sometimes help you get gigs. I've been asked to play drums on a session, and then when I got there they started talking about programming and working with loops. This goes hand in hand with learning how to play with a click and having good time. As a drummer, you also have to know how to program certain machines and how to sequence things. Technology is here to stay—and it changes monthly.

In my studio I have three Macs—a G5 and two G4s—plus I have a Powerbook G4 that I can travel with. I use Pro Tools and Digital Performer. I record tracks in the little studio



at my house. People email me MP3 files, and I record and send back a CD of my tracks. It's still nice to have a regular session and play with live cats, but nowadays you have to be adaptable to any situation.

**MD:** What did you do when you left North Texas?

**Rick:** I went on the road with an Elvis impersonator. We played Vegas. It was a great gig. Those who saw drummer Ronnie Tutt with Elvis—he was a killer. But that was a great gig for me because this impersonator was a very well-known performer named Bobby Young. I had a big double bass set like Ronnie Tutt, and I learned his playing lick for lick. It was a great experience playing in those hotels and doing that show night after night. It was my first real professional gig, although when I was really young, I had played with artists like The Drifters and The Temptations, who would come through town.

I did the Elvis thing for a few years and then landed back in Dallas. I was able to get into the jingle scene there, which was really happening around 1980. While I was teaching at North Texas, I was already working on my *Advanced Funk Studies* book. I was transcribing a lot of stuff for my drumset lessons and would take these things into my teachers and say, "Look what I transcribed this week." All of the teachers said, "This is cool. You should put this in a book."

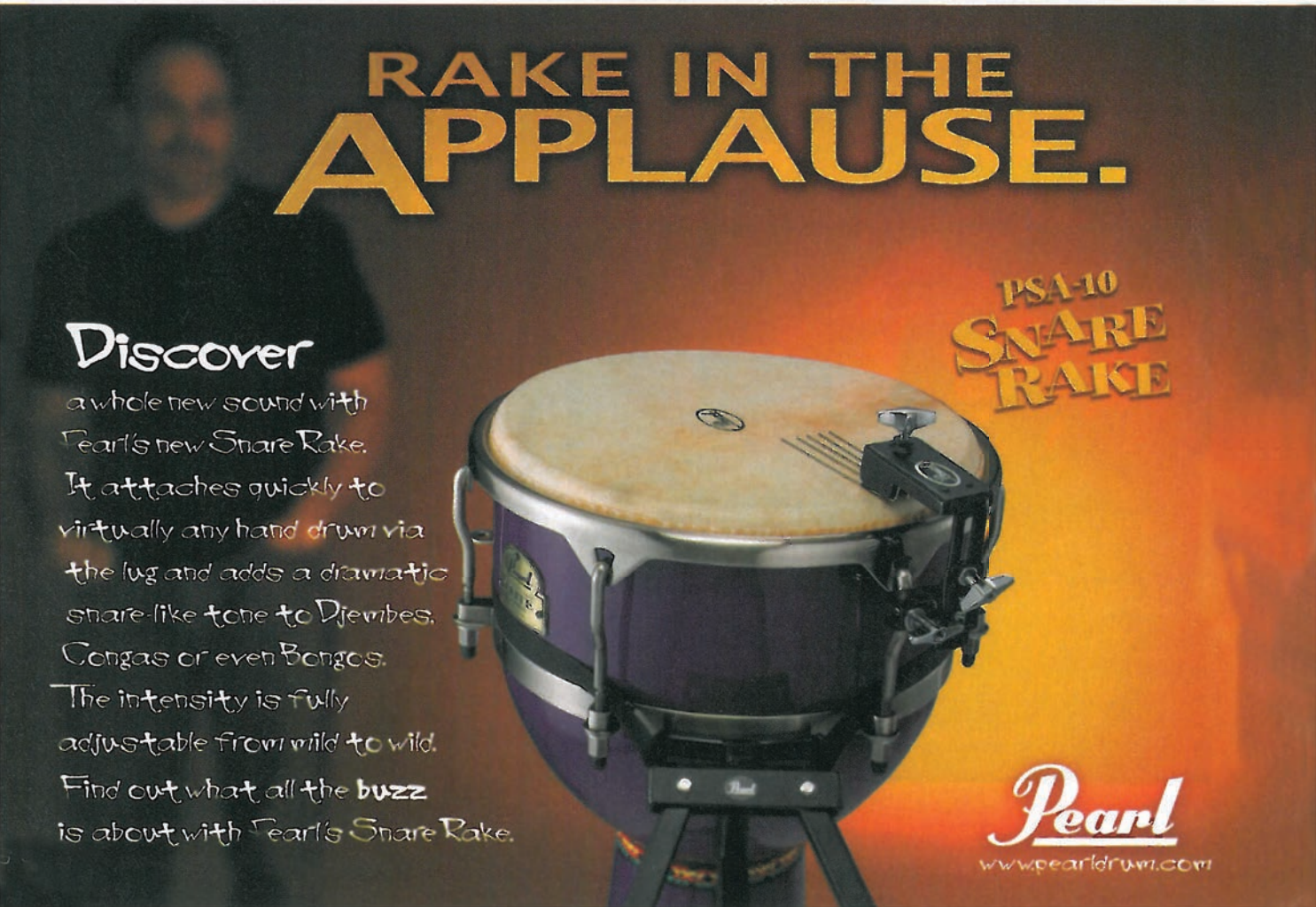
So when I came back to Dallas, I finally sat down, put all of my ideas together, and wrote the book. I lived in my first little house, playing in a Top-40 cover band and teaching. I also played with bass legend Chuck Rainey in a funk power trio, which was definitely a high point.

The book became well known quickly. I had met Louie, Ed, and Steve Gadd, who were very helpful in recommending the book when it first came out. And companies began approaching me with endorsements because clinics were just sort of starting then. These companies could see I was a very professional guy—I was punctual and I could communicate since I had a teaching background. Plus I could play. I started becoming known as a clinician and the guy who wrote *Advanced Funk Studies*.

After a few years in Dallas, I felt I really needed to move to New York or LA. In the early '80s, I was at the last NAMM show they had in Chicago, and I played with B.B. King with [Nashville drumming great] Larrie Londin. Neal Schon was playing guitar, who I had played a couple of gigs with. But through that association I got the gig with B.B. I'm a big believer in positive things. I believe if you put yourself in the right situations, things happen. And if you surround yourself with great people, great things happen.

I ended up going to LA because I saw that LA was a little more commercial than New York, with more music situations. I could maybe do a TV show, play with an artist, or play in clubs. Also at that time, New York was really expensive, so in 1984 I moved to LA. I drove out in a blue Ford van with my drums and a tux.

One of the first weeks I was here, I met Stan Keyawa at Pro Drum Shop in Hollywood, who became one of my best friends and probably the person who helped me the most of anybody. Bob Yeager, Stan's stepfather, used to take me down the street to this Italian place and talk to me about the music business in LA. He had played drums on some old Westerns like *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*. All



# Rick's Picks

"Drum solos and fast licks don't excite me very much," says Rick Latham. "I'm more into playing *with* a band. The groove or feeling that is created is always the most important thing for me, whether I'm listening or playing. Most of the recordings and players that have influenced me over the years are all about great grooves and good-feeling, positive music, not fast tempos or a lot of notes."

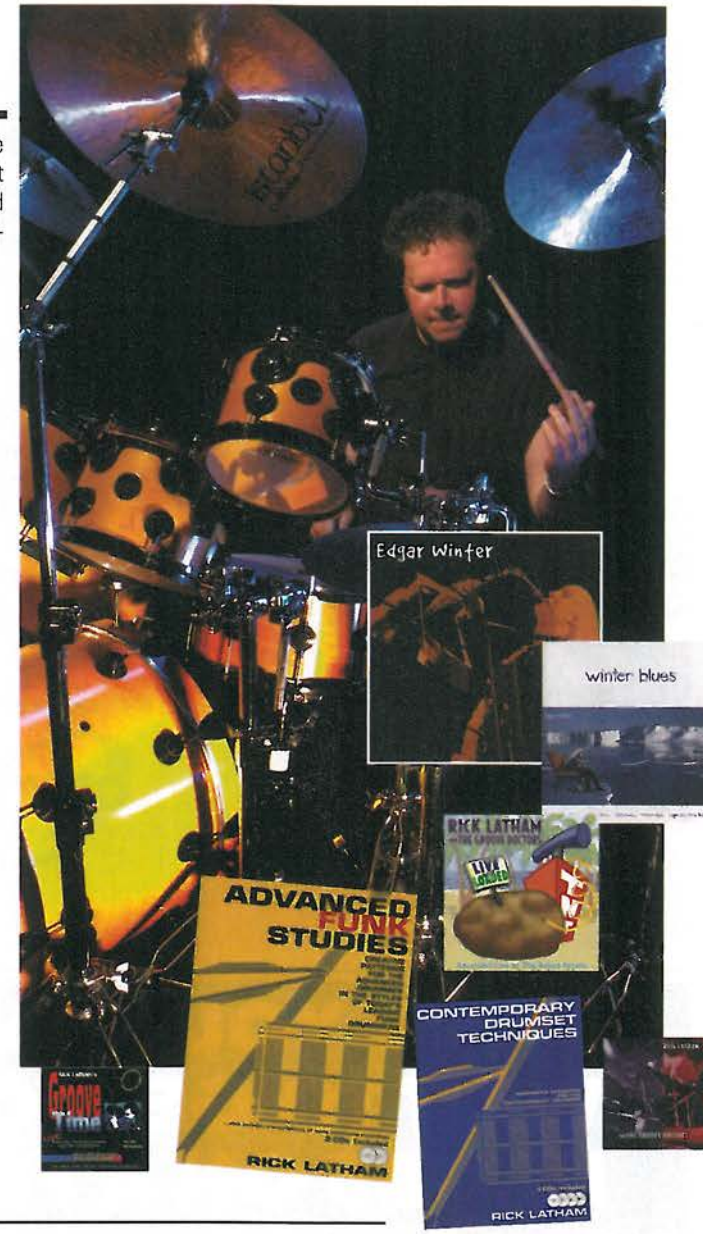
## Recordings

| Artist | Album |
|---|---|
| Edgar Winter | Winter Blues |
| Edgar Winter | Jazzin' The Blues |
| Rick Latham & The Groove Doctors | Live And Loaded |
| Rick Latham & The Groove Doctors | self-titled |
| Jon Burton And Blues Deluxe | Private Stock (live) |

## Favorites

| Artist | Album | Drummer |
|---|---|---|
| Jimi Hendrix | Are You Experienced? | Mitch Mitchell |
| Herbie Hancock | Headhunters | Harvey Mason |
| Herbie Hancock | Thrust | Mike Clark |
| Buddy Rich | Big Swing Face | Buddy Rich |
| Tower Of Power | Back To Oakland | David Garibaldi |
| Grand Funk Railroad | Grand Funk Railroad Live | Don Brewer |
| Led Zeppelin | Led Zeppelin IV | John Bonham |
| Paul Simon | One Trick Pony | Steve Gadd |
| Paul Simon | Still Crazy After All These Years | Steve Gadd |
| Joe Cocker | Mad Dogs And Englishmen | Jim Keltner, Jim Gordon |
| Steely Dan | Aja | Steve Gadd, Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta, Ed Greene, Jim Keltner, Paul Humphrey |

Plus any recordings by these great artists: Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, James Brown, Dave Brubeck (Joe Morello), The Meters (Zigaboo Modeliste), Little Feat (Richie Hayward), Booker T & The MGs (Al Jackson), Max Roach, Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Bernard Purdie, James Gadson, and Roy Haynes.




sorts of name drummers would hang out at Pro Drum, and I got to meet them.

I was staying at a place right near the musicians union. I walked into the union one day and met a buddy of mine from Dallas, John Gates, who said, "Rick, I'm going on the road and I've been doing these dance rehearsals for a movie. Would you like to do this movie?" It was unbelievable! He told me to call the pianist, D'Vaugh Pershing. So I called him, and he said, "We start tomorrow." I walked in and Quincy Jones was doing the music for the show, and Sidney Poitier was directing! I worked on that movie—*Fast Forward*—for months.

Then, at the same time I was doing that movie, I started doing the TV series *Fame*, which was the same kind of thing. Dancers seemed to like my sort of Southern groove thing, so I would do all these dance shows they used to have at MGM and Twentieth Century.

**MD:** You've done so many different kinds of gigs. But what went into playing with Edgar Winter?

**Rick:** Well, when I was about sixteen years old in Shelby, North Carolina, I used to play in my bedroom to my cranked-up stereo. Kids used to come from around the block to hear me practice. It was like playing a concert. I would put a stack of 45s on and play these tunes, and, of course, two of them were Edgar's "Frankenstein" and "Free Ride."

At the same NAMM show where I met B.B. King, I met Carmine Appice. Years later Carmine recommended me to Edgar. I auditioned, Edgar liked it, and I got the gig. The first night on stage with Edgar playing "Frankenstein," I just kept thinking about when I was sixteen and playing that tune in my room.

Edgar is a good drummer himself. In fact, he played that timbale part on "Frankenstein." Over the years, in concert, Edgar extended the timbale bit and it turned into a big drum thing. But playing with guys like B.B. and Edgar is amazing. And I really think that being a trained musician—I minored in keyboards in college—helped me in both situations, because I could communicate with them. Edgar and I really liked talking about music.

**MD:** Can you name a couple of recordings you've done that you're particularly proud of?

**Rick:** The most recent things would be Edgar's last two records, *Winter Blues* and *Jazzin' The Blues*. On *Winter Blues*, there's a

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## Rick Latham

track called "New Orleans" that had Dr. John on it, which is a funky thing. On the other album there's a tune called "Hunk Of The Funk," which Edgar wrote with me in mind. That one's pretty cool too. Those are representative of my playing. Also, last year's Rick Latham & The Groove Doctors album *Live And Loaded*, recorded live at the Baked Potato, is a record that I'm very proud of.

**MD:** Tell us about your band.

**Rick:** The Groove Doctors is a strong band of dynamite players. Albert Wing worked with Zappa and is a killer tenor and flute player. Michael Saucier is on bass, Bob Luna is on keys, and Mack Dougherty plays guitar. Mack attended and taught at Berklee and roomed with [bass legend] Jaco Pastorius in Miami. Ken Tussing, the trombone player, played with Ray Charles for fifteen years. The band is kind of like the Crusaders—a very funky kind of thing.

I have my own label, RLP Records, and all of our records are available on the Web. The band will be performing at the PASIC convention and the Montreal Drum Fest in November.

**MD:** And what about this new DVD?

**Rick:** As I mentioned, this year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Advanced Funk Studies*, which Carl Fischer now distributes. The DVD contains both of the educational videos I had done for the book. There's also new footage, as well as interviews with Louie Bellson and Ed Shaughnessy. I'm very proud of this new DVD.

Besides the DVD, I have a lot of other projects in the works. I want to do more books. And I have a very exciting play-along project I'm working on, which will be called *The Real World Play-Along*. It contains tracks that give the drummer a chance to play the type of grooves he or she may encounter when they're on a gig. It'll be a thing where, if some metal guy wants to play in a blues band, he can put on this thing and learn how to play an organ shuffle, a B.B. King kind of groove, or a bossa nova.

Even with all of the gigs I do, I'm still really into the educational thing, having learned the value of it myself. People need to be exposed to this stuff. The more you know, the better off you'll be.

*For more on Rick, go to www.ricklatham.com or www.groovedoctorsjazz.com.*

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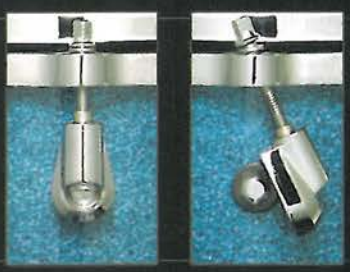

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# Dave Matthews Band's Carter Beauford

## Stand Up

*by Ed Breckenfeld*

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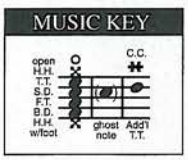
**The continuing evolution of Dave Matthews' music finds his band paring down to the groove essentials on their latest release. Sometimes this calls for pure restraint, as in Carter Beauford's almost cymbal-less backbeat on the opening track. But even though the grooves are becoming more tasteful, there's still plenty of excitement and interest in the drum patterns, as well as a few places where Carter steps out as only he can. Let's have a look.**

### "Stand Up"

The title track features this infectious beat, tying together Stefan Lessard's bass line and Dave Matthews' guitar riff into one tight funk package. (0:11)

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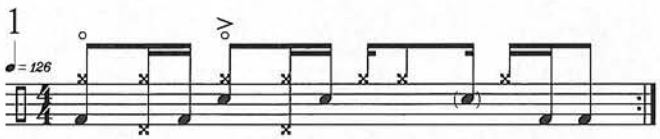
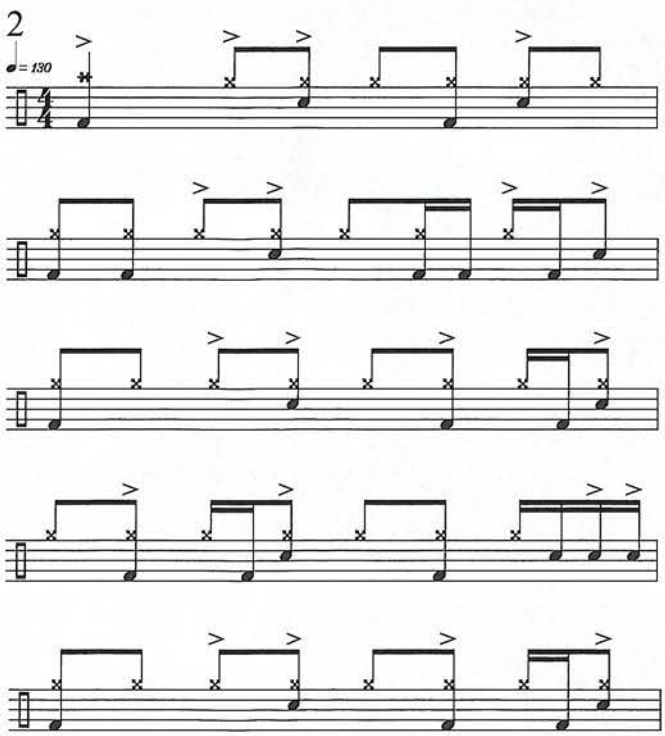
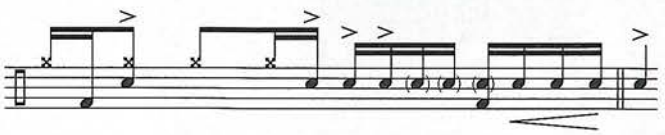

### "American Baby Intro"

This little instrumental piece allows Carter to mess with time displacement, using offbeat snare and hi-hat accents. (0:43)

2

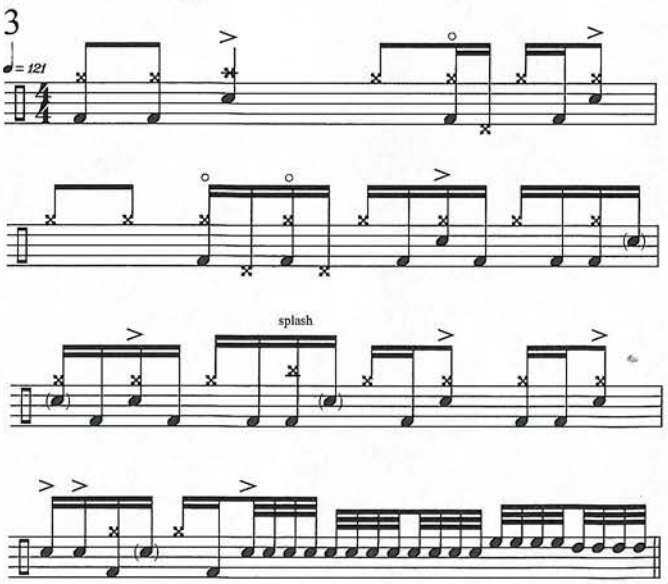


### "American Baby"

On the album's first single, Beauford holds back for most of the song with a simple beat before exploding into joyfully twisted rhythms in the vamp out. (3:58)

3




### "Everybody Wake Up"

In this track, Carter locks into a powerful repetitive groove that drives home the message of Dave's cautionary plea. (1:52)

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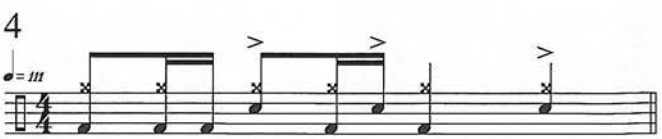
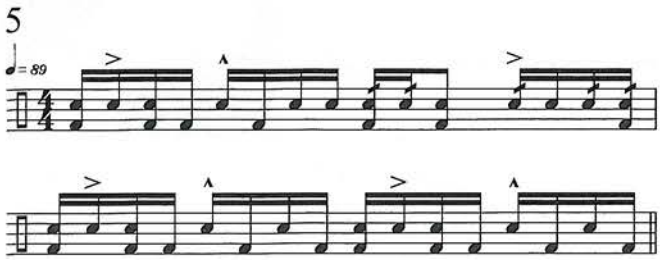
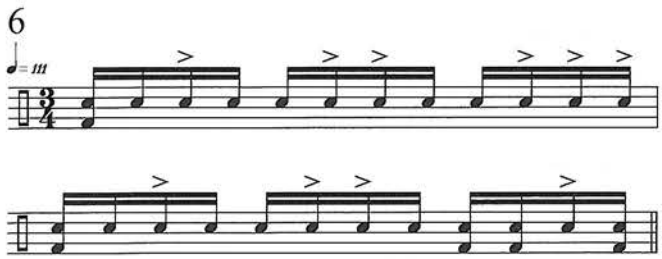

**"Out Of My Hands"**

The flowing snare pattern in this quiet song contains some tasty double-stroke work. (2:30)



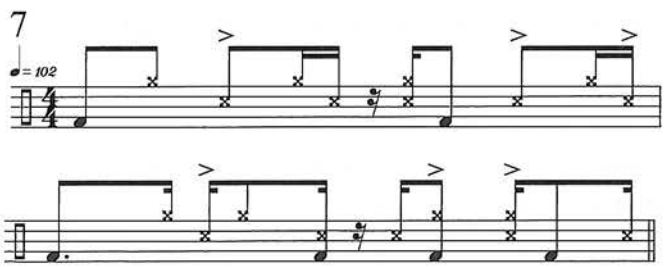

**"Hello Again"**

DMB puts an interesting slant on the Southern blues train beat by placing it in 3/4 time. The sparse bass drum pattern adds an open, relaxed feel. (0:10)



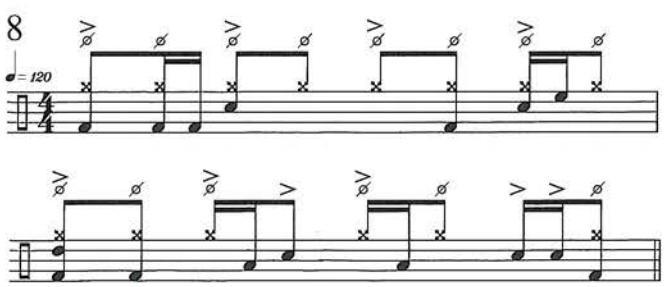

**"You Might Die Trying"**

Carter's back to his old tricks with his stuttering hi-hat work in this track. (0:47)

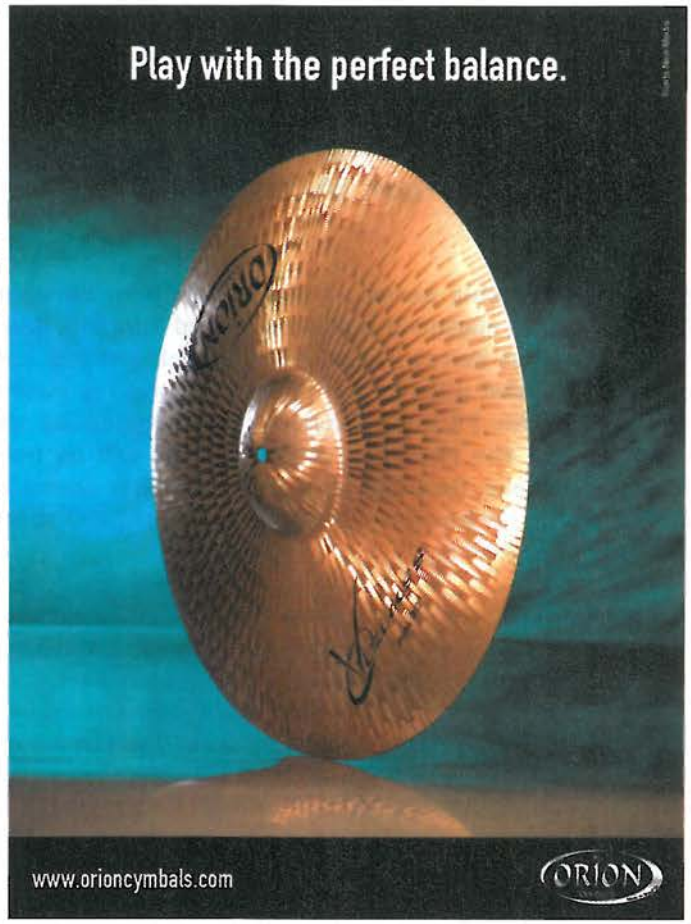


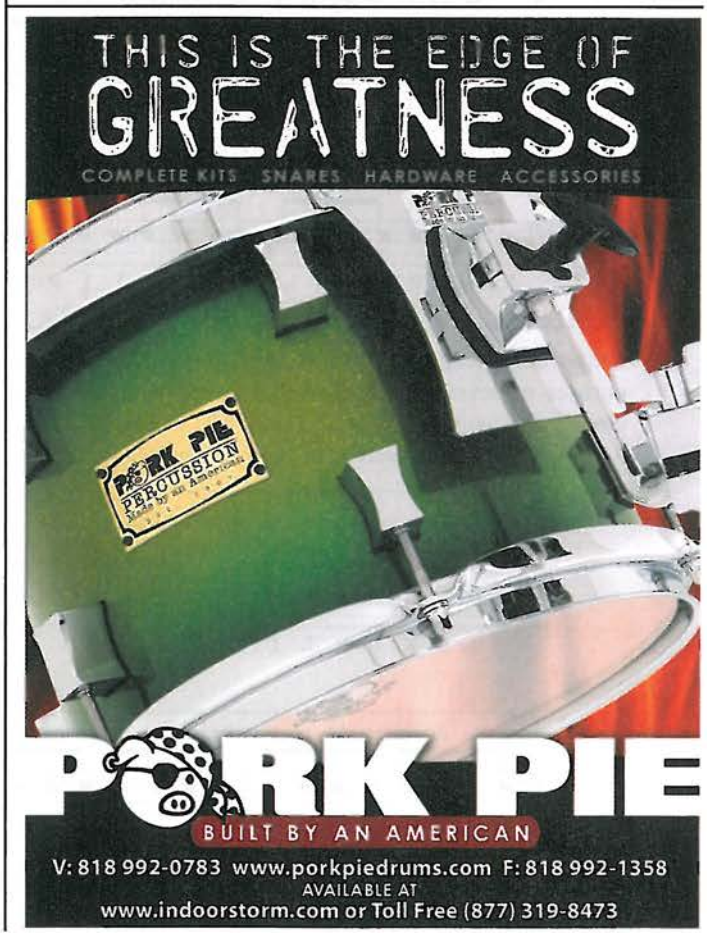

**"Hunger For The Great Light"**

The album closer takes a heavier turn, and Beauford responds with a splashy hi-hat and some cool subtle tom accents. (0:52)




*You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site: www.edbreckenfeld.com.*

# Indian Rhythms

## An Intro For Western Drummers, Part 2

*by Steve Smith*

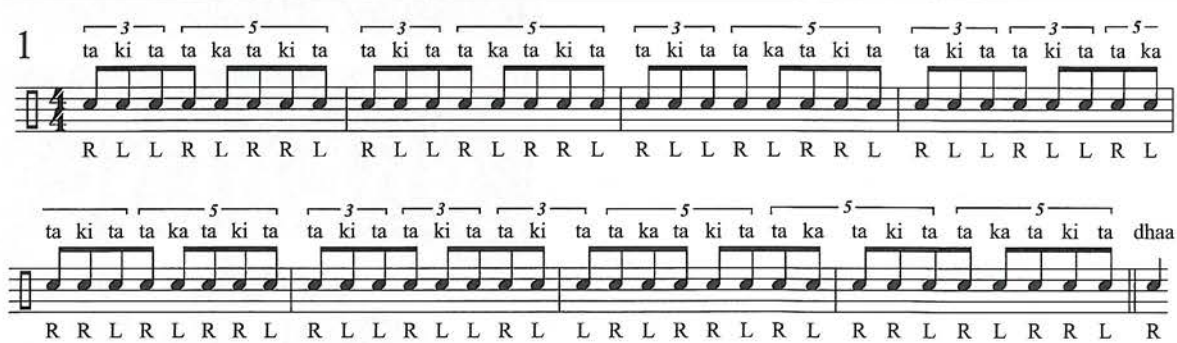
**In Part 1 of this series, I introduced you to some South Indian rhythmic syllables called konokol. (As I mentioned last month, I feel that learning these concepts has added a lot to my drumming and my awareness of rhythm.) I suggested that you memorize the syllables and the rhythmic phrases. This will be helpful as we move forward and put together some of those shorter building blocks into longer, more involved phrases.**

We will start by taking some of the basic building blocks and arranging them so they construct longer phrases that have a logical symmetry. Rhythms that have symmetry are a very common feature of Indian music. We'll start very simply so you can try out some of your new skills. The first example takes phrases of three and five in 8th notes and arranges them over eight bars of 4/4 time.

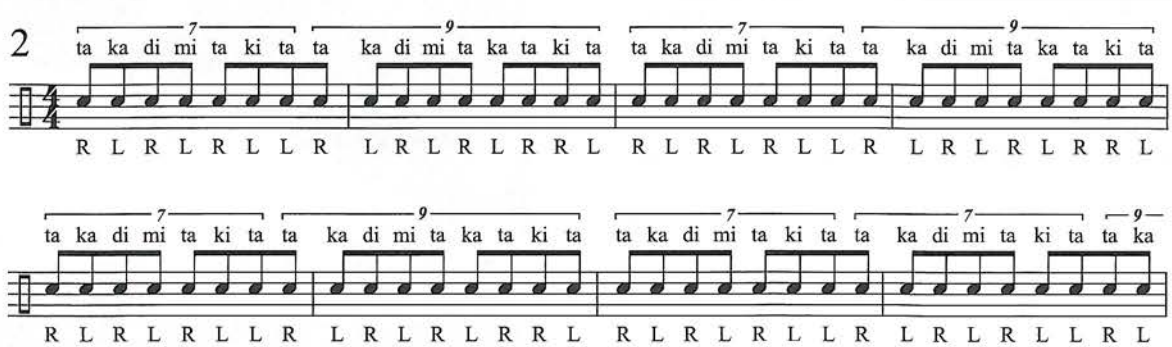
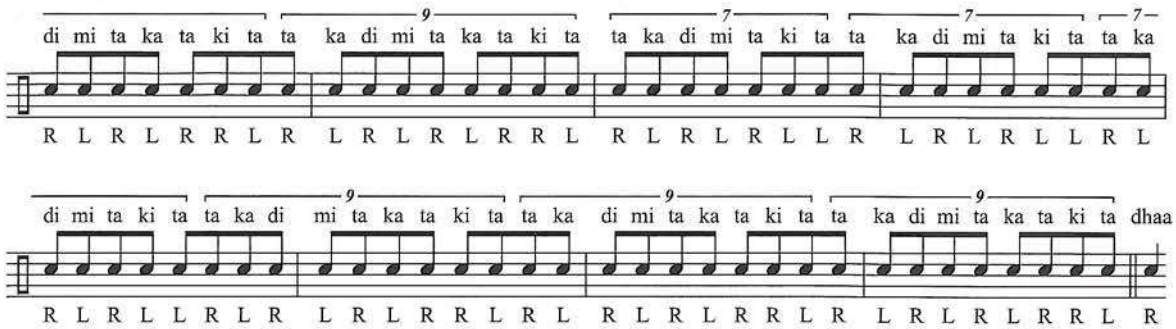
I have written this out in Western notation, but the best way to do this—and to use the Indian conception—is to memorize the sequence of phrases and play it from memory. The sequence is: 3+5, 3+5, 3+5, 3+3, 5+5, 3+3+3, 5+5+5, and then it resolves to beat 1.

First identify the formula. This will make it easier to memorize. The first rhythm, 3+5, is repeated three times, then the 3s are repeated two times and the 5s are repeated two times, then the 3s are repeated three times and the 5s are repeated three times. Now that you've identified the formula, it should be easy to remember the entire piece.

I've written out the stickings and the konokol syllables in Example 1, which may be helpful while you memorize the piece. Start with only the konokol, and once you're comfortable with that, play the rhythms on your snare drum and recite the syllables at the same time. Notice that the stickings used are consistent: RLL for groups of three and RLRRL for groups of five. You can put accents at the beginning of each phrase of three and five; this will help you begin to make music out of the phrases.

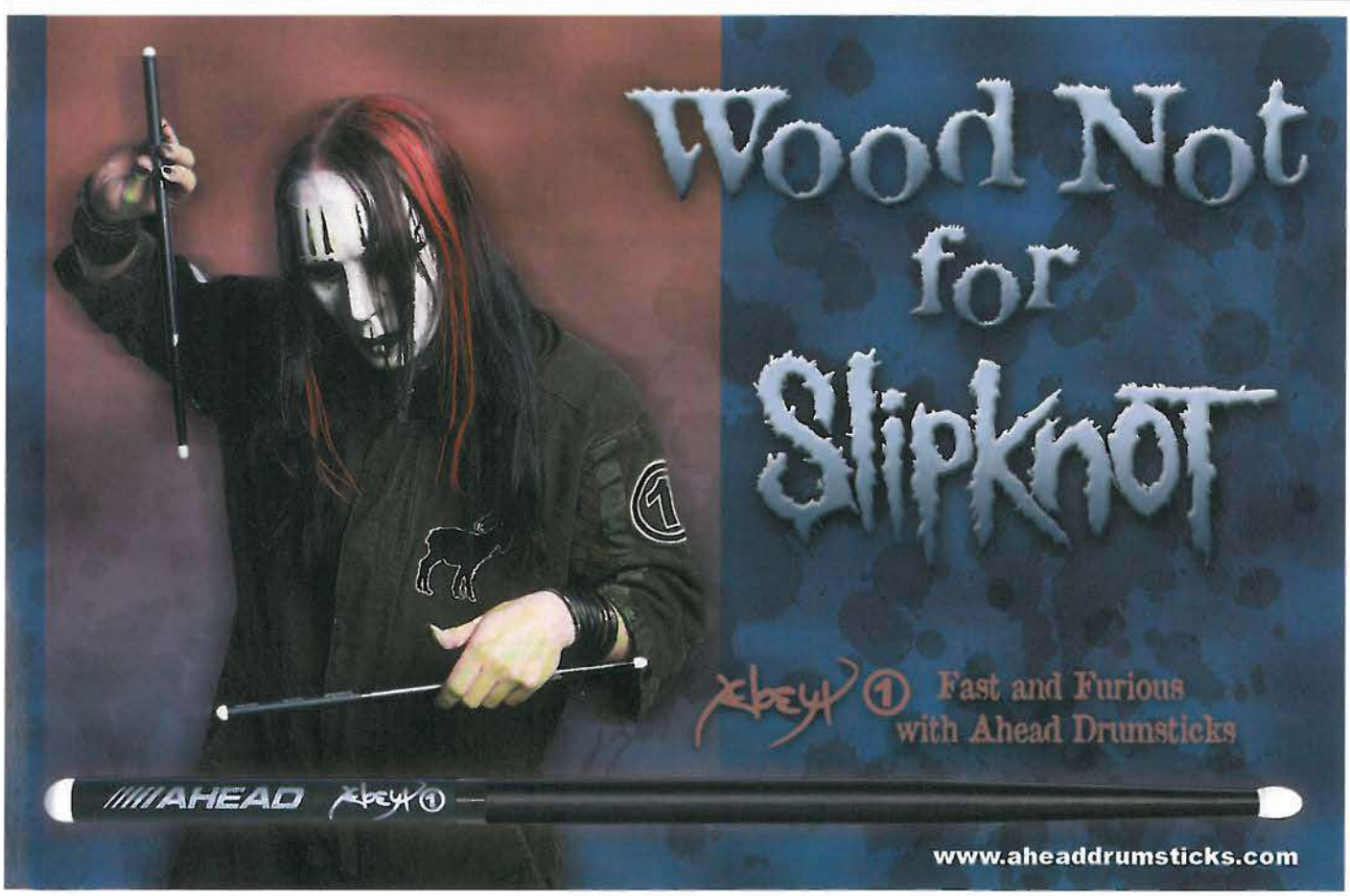



Example 2 employs the exact same formula, except it uses phrases of seven and nine over sixteen bars of 4/4 time. Here's the sequence: 7+9, 7+9, 7+9, 7+7, 9+9, 7+7+7, 9+9+9, and then it resolves to beat 1. Again I've used consistent stickings—RLRLRLL for groups of seven and RLRLRLRRL for groups of nine. The 7s are phrased 4+3 and the 9s are phrased 4+5.



Start with the konokol. One of the great advantages of konokol is that you can practice rhythms away from the drums. You can recite the syllables while walking down the street or driving your car. (You may have to be careful about who hears you, though, so you're not locked up in the nearest asylum!)

Once you've mastered the konokol, play the stickings on the snare drum while keeping quarter notes or half notes on the hi-hat. After a while you'll begin to hear ways of including the bass drum, cymbals, and toms into the rhythmic phrases. These rhythms have been traditionally played on Indian drums, not the drumset, so their application to the drumset is largely unexplored territory. Let your imagination be your guide.

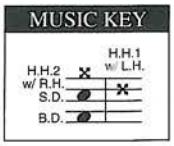


# The Anatomy Of A Groove

## Sound Levels And Permutation

*by David Garibaldi*

MUSIC KEY



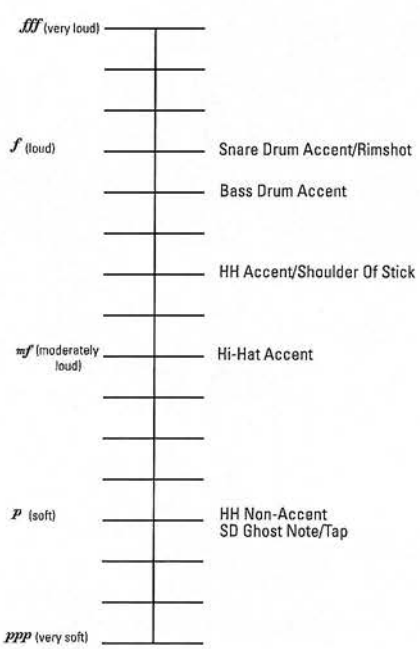

**In this month's column, we'll take a look at two fundamental ideas: the development of two sound levels, and permutation. In my articles and books, these topics are revisited often, because I feel they are very useful in building an individual concept.**

The development of *The Funky Beat* focuses on the three most basic components of the drumset: hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum. These three voices are used to build groove vocabulary.

### Two Sound Levels With The Hands

The hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum are the three basic drumset components used in the funk drumming style. The two–sound level concept is important in that it defines the sound parameters between the basic voices and can be expanded to the other drumset components. Understanding how these voices interact with each other is an important key to building a powerful and personal drumset "groove book."

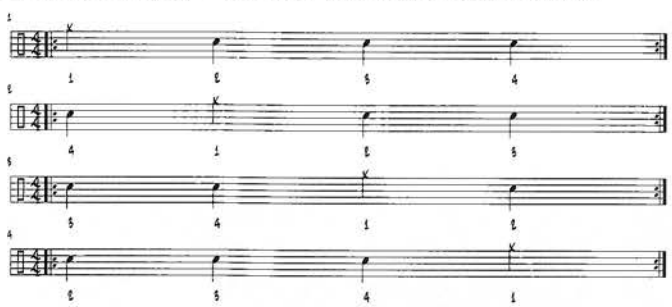
The following graph illustrates the dynamic distances between these three voices.




These levels are always controlled by the overall dynamic level of the music being played. In a normal playing situation, the rimshot may or may not be forte (*f*, loud). This is determined by the situation. The graph illustrates the differences in the two levels and is not meant to be interpreted literally. That said, most recordings will reflect what is shown in this graph.

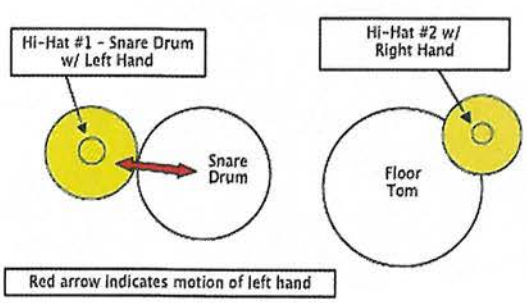
### Permutation

Basically, you can't play rhythms you can't hear. Permutation expands any rhythm idea, and develops your ability to hear unusual rhythms in relation to whatever the time signature is. This concept can be applied to all time signatures, but for the purposes of *The Funky Beat*, we'll focus on 4/4 time.

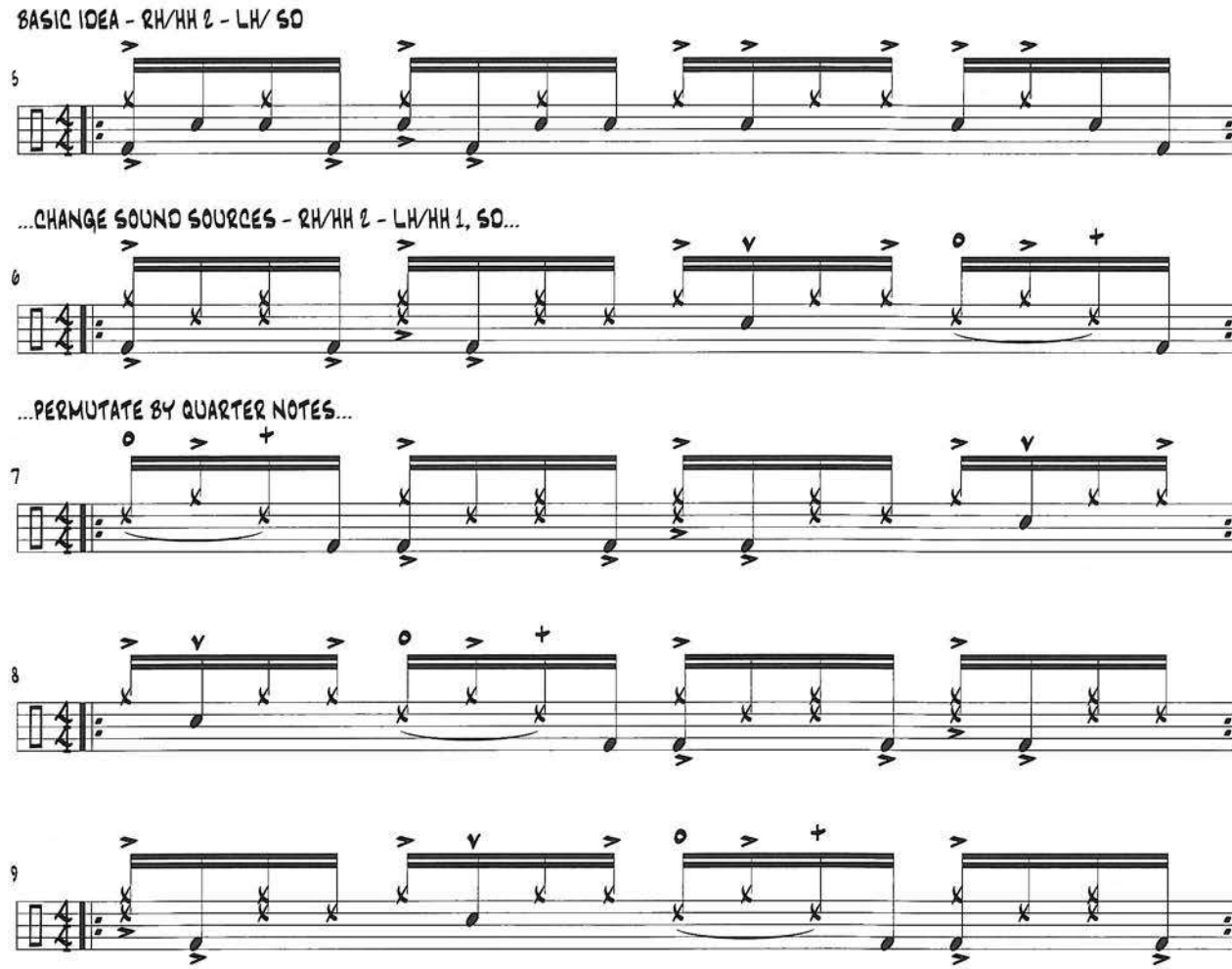
Permutation means the reordering or rearranging of items in a group. Here's a simple illustration of the concept using quarter notes. In Examples 1–4, follow the hi-hat in each measure.

This is the basic permutation idea, which can then be applied to 8th notes, 16th notes, triplets...any rhythm can be explored this way. Counting aloud is also an extremely important component in this. **Count aloud while learning these grooves.** See my book *Future Sounds* (Alfred Publishing) for a complete explanation.

### Combining The Concepts

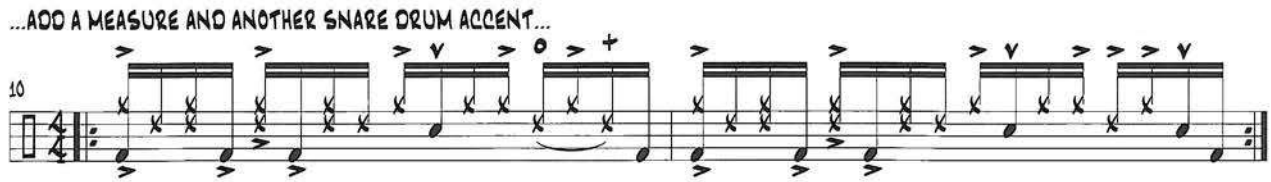
Now let's apply all of what we've discussed to a groove. The following musical examples use the basic three voices—hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum—with the addition of a fourth voice, a second hi-hat positioned on the opposite side of the drumset. (For those of you who don't use a second hi-hat, you can substitute the ride cymbal bell and still enjoy the benefits of this material.) If you use a left-handed setup, the following diagram is reversed.

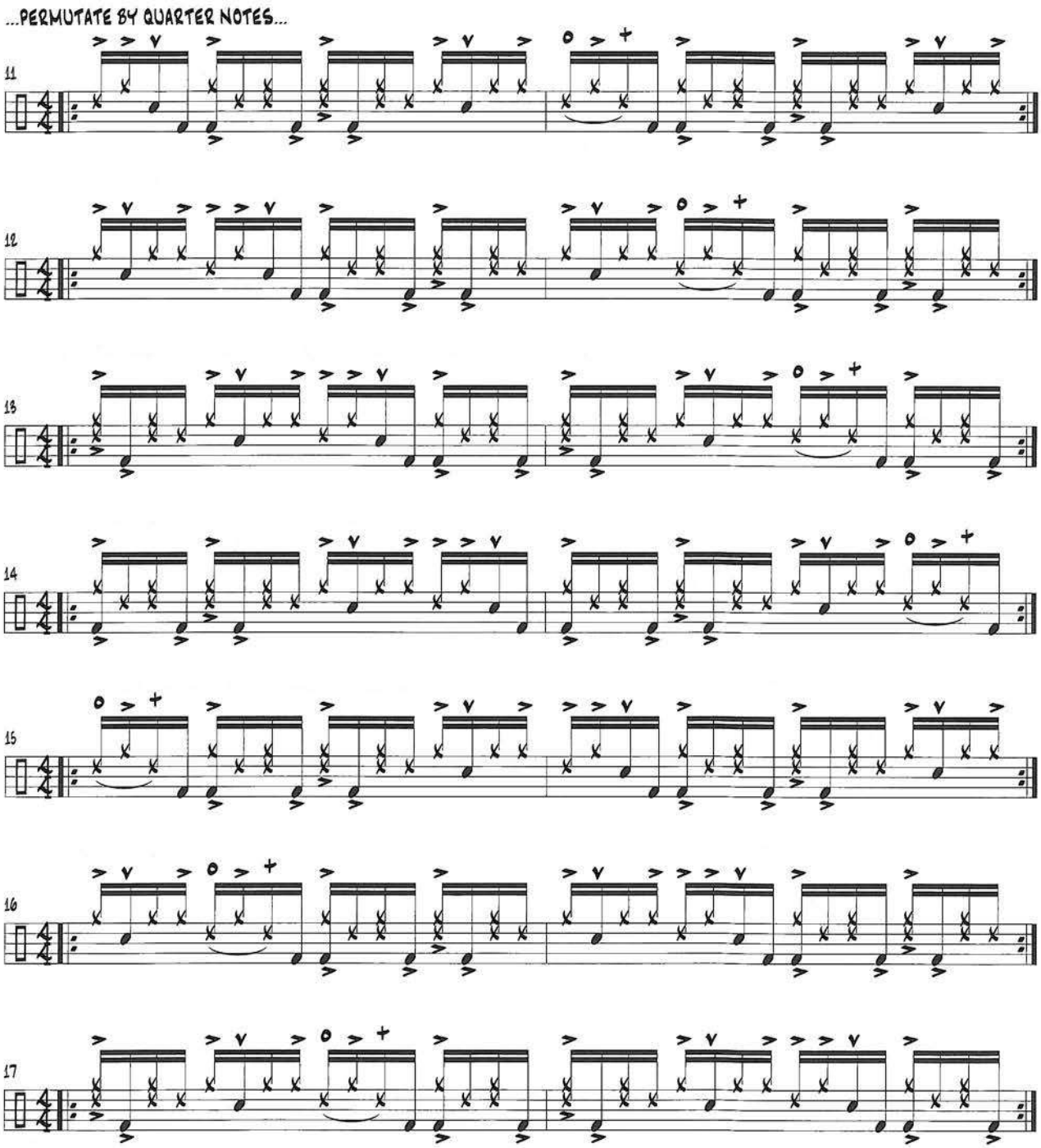


The basic groove is shown in Example 5. In Example 6, the sound sources are changed. Then, in Examples 7–9, they permutate by quarter notes. When you practice these examples, don't forget the sound levels.




Taking this a step further, you can add another measure and an additional snare drum accent and permutate it by quarter notes. For example, beat 4 in measure two of Example 10 becomes beat 1 of Example 11. Follow this process through the remaining exercises.



## David Garibaldi

There's a lot presented in this article. It will probably keep you busy for a while. But be patient and go slow. Along the way there will be a growing awareness of your mind's limitless capacity for rhythm, and you'll discover many new ways to apply these ideas to your own vocabulary. Enjoy!

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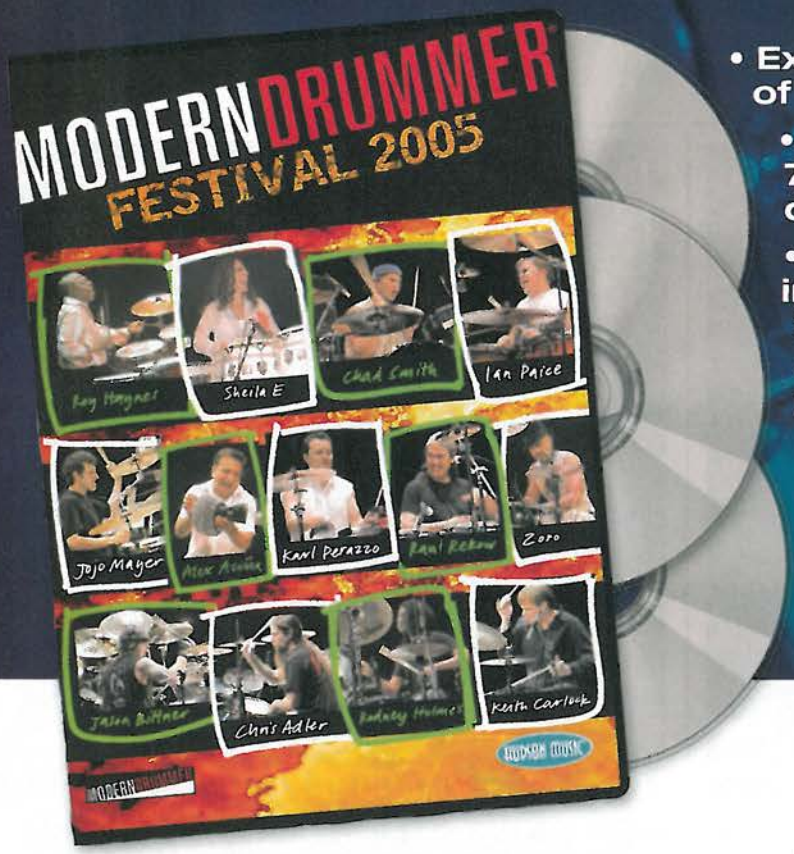


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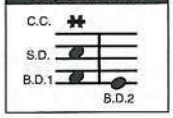
# Double Bass Drumming

## Part 13: Call And Response

*by Rod Morgenstein*

MUSIC KEY

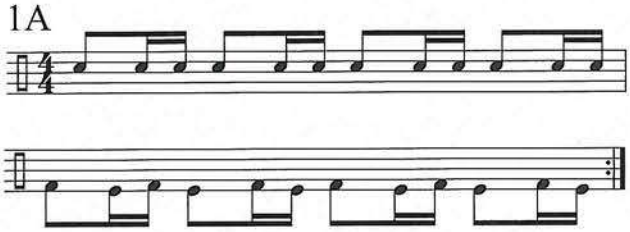



**The past two articles have focused on a solo/fill technique that involves playing constant notes with the hands while doubling some of those notes with the feet. Another very effective soloing technique is known as "call and response" or "question/answer." In this article, we'll apply this concept by having the feet mimic various rhythms played by the hands.**

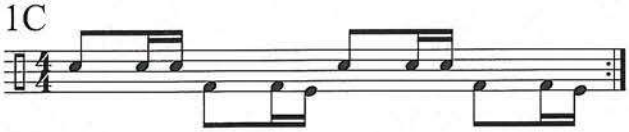
Examples 1–5 represent five common rhythmic patterns. Each of the examples consists of a two-measure (A), one-measure (B), and half-measure (C) "call and response" pattern. Even though the hand patterns are written on the snare line, feel free to experiment by using toms and other sound sources in your kit.

Examples 1A–C contain one 8th note followed by two 16ths.

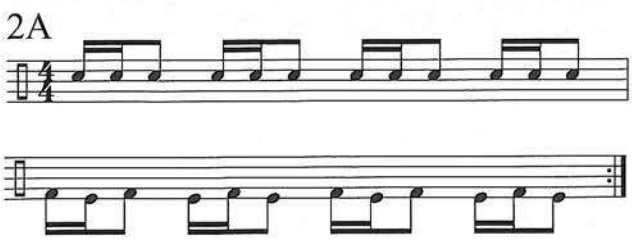
1A

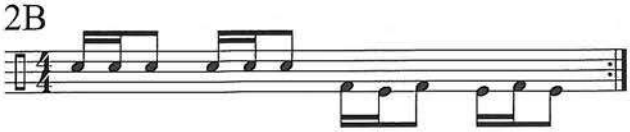


1B

1C

For Examples 2A–C, the pattern is reversed to two 16ths followed by one 8th note.

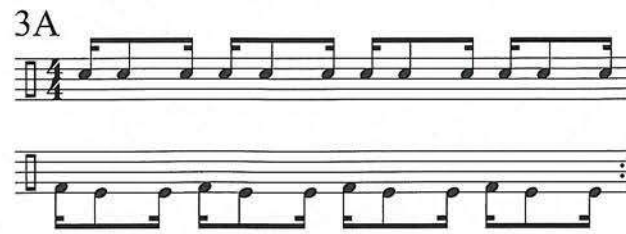
2A

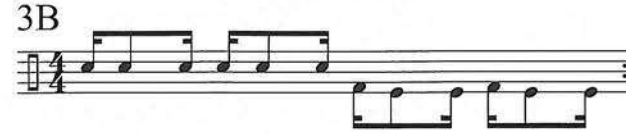
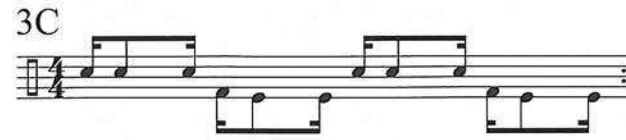


2B

2C

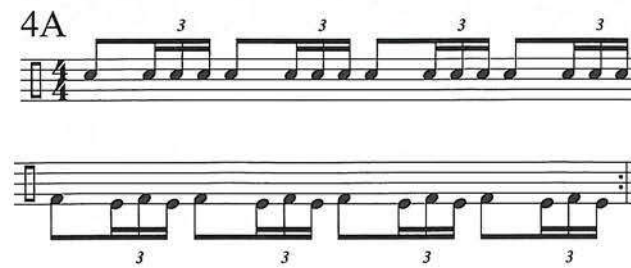
Examples 3A–C are based on the pattern 16th/8th/16th.

3A

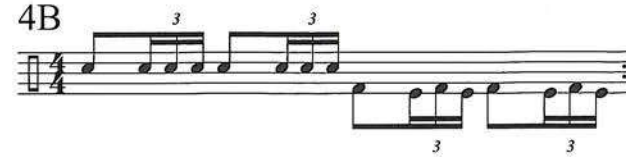


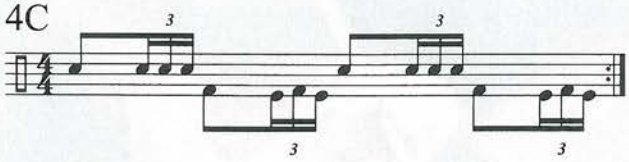
3B

3C

Examples 4A–C involve an 8th note followed by three 16th-note triplets.

4A

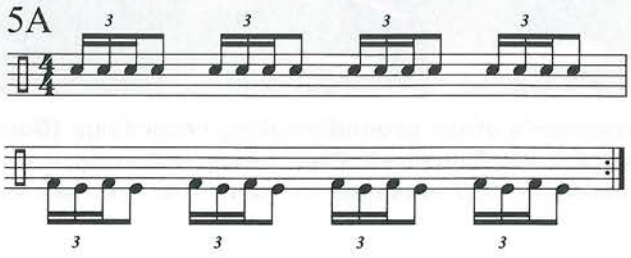



4B

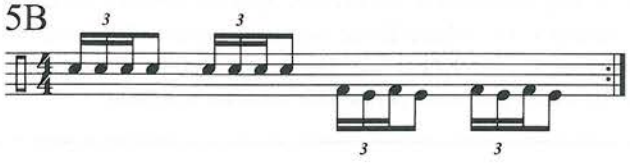


4C

For Examples 5A–C, the pattern is reversed to three 16th-note triplets and an 8th note.

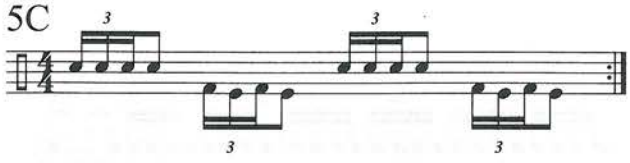
5A



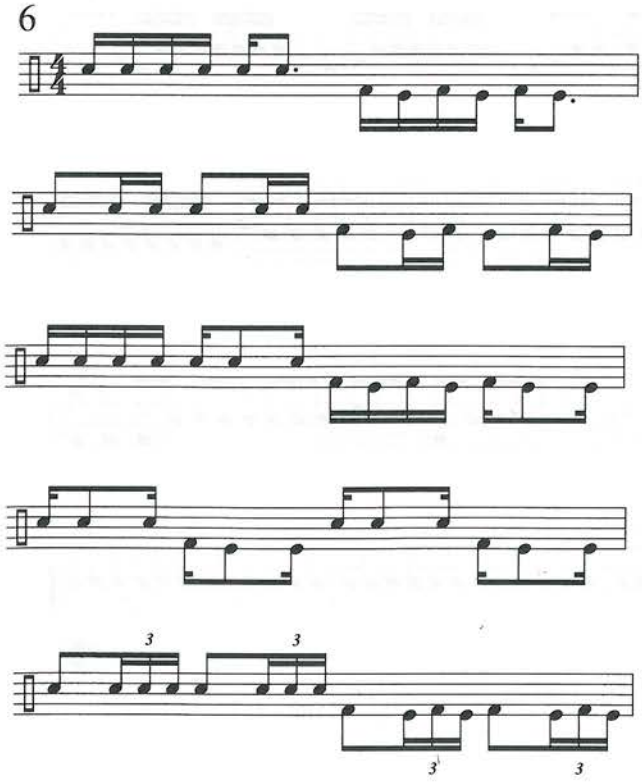
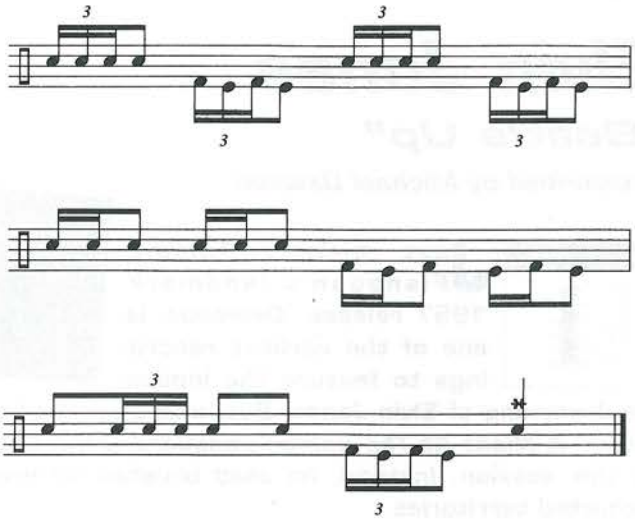
5B



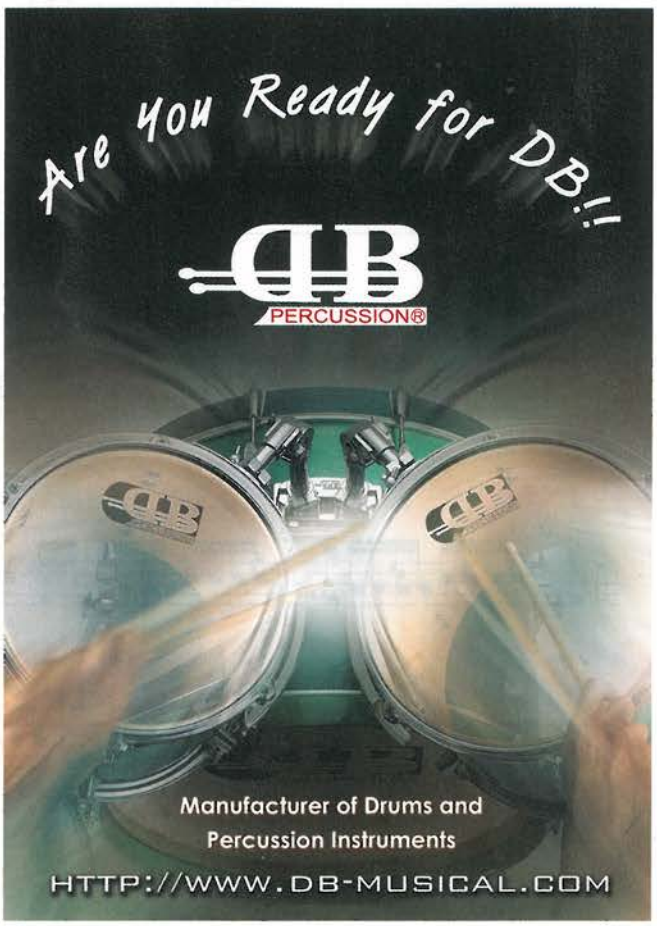
5C



Example 6 is an eight-bar solo that combines all of the above exercises.

6

Note that some of the "footings" used in these exercises do not always follow the system discussed earlier in this series, which had all quarter notes and 8th notes played with the right foot and all "e's" and "a's" played with the left foot. For instance, in Example 1 I chose to alternate the feet rather than overload the right foot with a RLR RLR RLR RLR pattern. But find what works best for *you*. Just be conscious of playing the downbeat of each measure with your strong foot.

Drum on!

# Elvin Jones

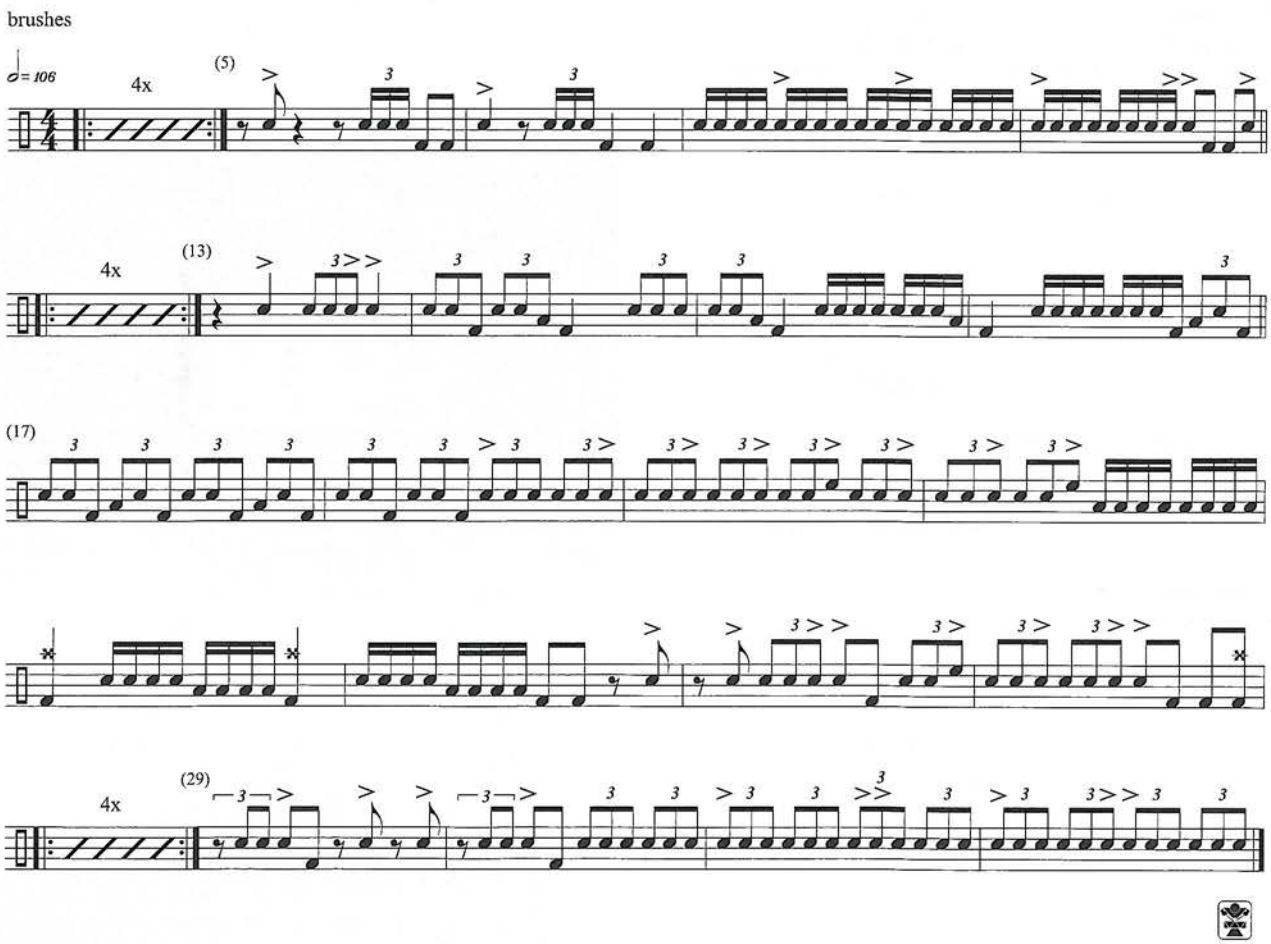
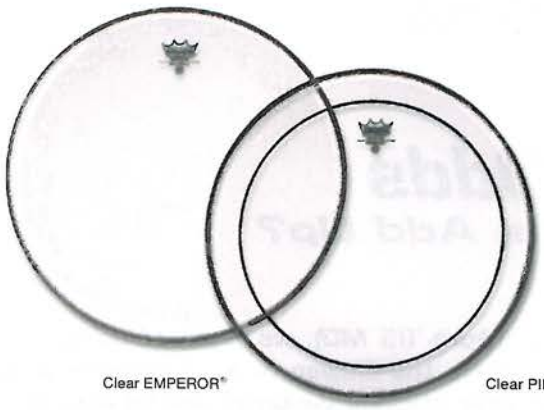
## "Beat's Up"

***transcribed by Michael Dawson***

MUSIC KEY

C.C.
T.T.
S.D.
F.T.
B.D.

**Jazz pianist Tommy Flanagan's landmark 1957 release, *Overseas*, is one of the earliest recordings to feature the innovative drumming of Elvin Jones. But, unlike some of the drummer's other groundbreaking recordings (Sonny Rollins' *A Night At The Village Vanguard*, John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*), Elvin never picked up a stick for this session. Instead, he used brushes on every tune—and *still* managed to push the drumset into uncharted territories.**

On "Beat's Up," Elvin trades solos with Flanagan over the tune's 32-bar form. At the start of each trade, Elvin avoids the downbeat, which gives an unpredictable quality to his solos. He also superimposes three-beat groupings in measures 14–15 and 21–22 that extend over the barline. Another phrasing trick occurs in measure 16, where Elvin begins a series of his signature hand/foot triplets on beat four. He blurs the barlines again in measure 20 with a 16th-note phrase that starts on beat three.



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Destiny's Child

Marvin McQuitty
Fred Hammond

Chad Smith
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# Evens And Odds

## How Do Your Fills Add Up?

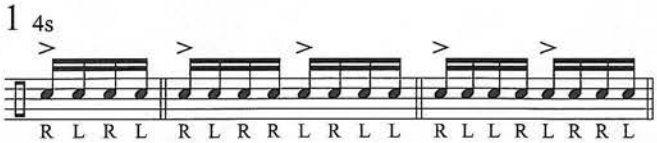
*by John Riley*

**In my last column, "The Pyramid" (April '05 *MD*), we explored using a couple of sticking patterns played at different rates of speed to create the illusion of an accelerating and decelerating ride cymbal pattern. This month we'll see how similar sticking patterns can be used to add variety and mystery to fills. The books of Gary Chaffee and Gavin Harrison have inspired this column.**

There are sixteen 16th notes in a measure of 4/4. These notes can be grouped many different ways. The most common is four groups of four notes. Now 4+5+7 also equals 16, but since the division of the measure is not symmetrical, the potential for intrigue increases. The rhythmic mystery increases even *more* when working in longer phrases. In this article we'll use a two-measure format and develop patterns that add up to thirty-two 16ths (two measures of 16ths), such as 4+4+5+5+7+7 = 32.

Below are some common sticking patterns for four-, five-, and seven-note phrases.

1 4s

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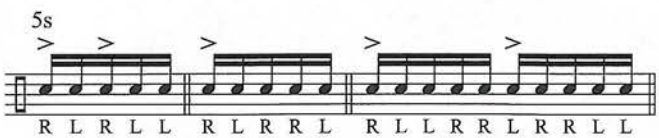
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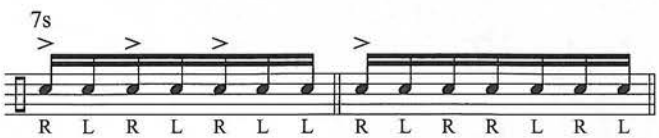
These sticking patterns generate interesting phrases when played in succession. Practice them with a metronome.

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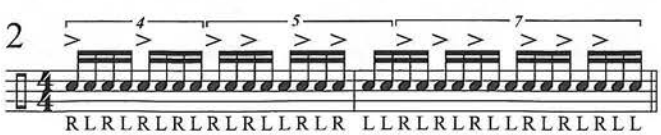
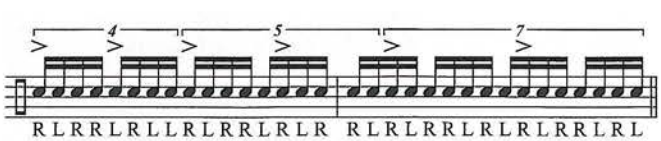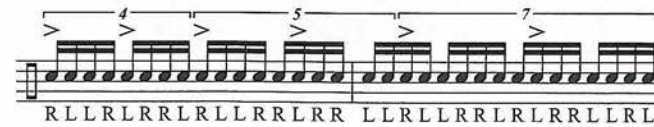

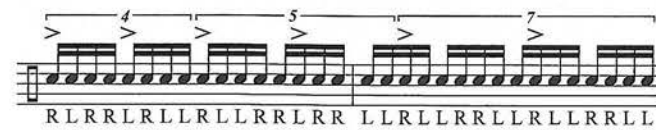


Even more mystery is created when you scramble the sequence of the four, five, and seven.

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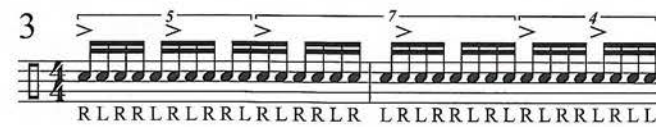
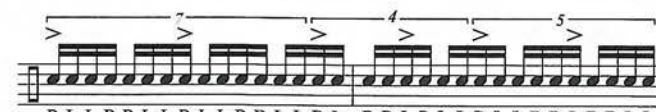
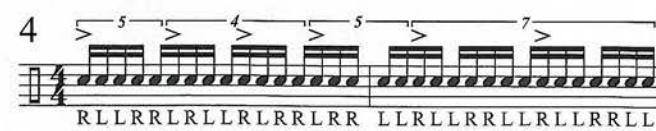
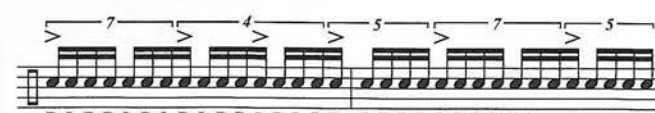
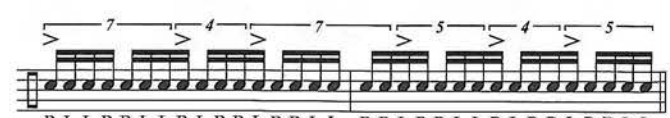
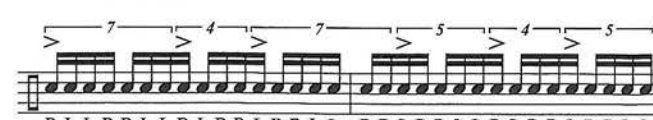

I prefer sequences like these, where beats 1 and 4 of the second measure are not accented. (There are many more possibilities. Find the ones you like.)

4

Once you can play these ideas smoothly, they'll open up your ears and limbs to new melodies on the drums. In time you'll "forget" these specific patterns, but what will remain will be the ability to accent any point in a measure without losing your flow. (When playing faster tempos, you can think of the stickings in 8th notes.)

Next time we'll take this idea further by varying the orchestration. See you then.

*John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written the critically acclaimed books* The Art Of Bop Drumming *and* Beyond Bop Drumming, *published by Manhattan Music. His latest book,* The Jazz Drummer's Workshop, *was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications.*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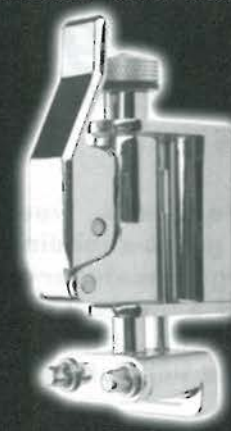

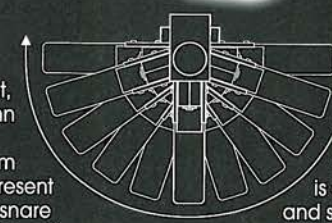

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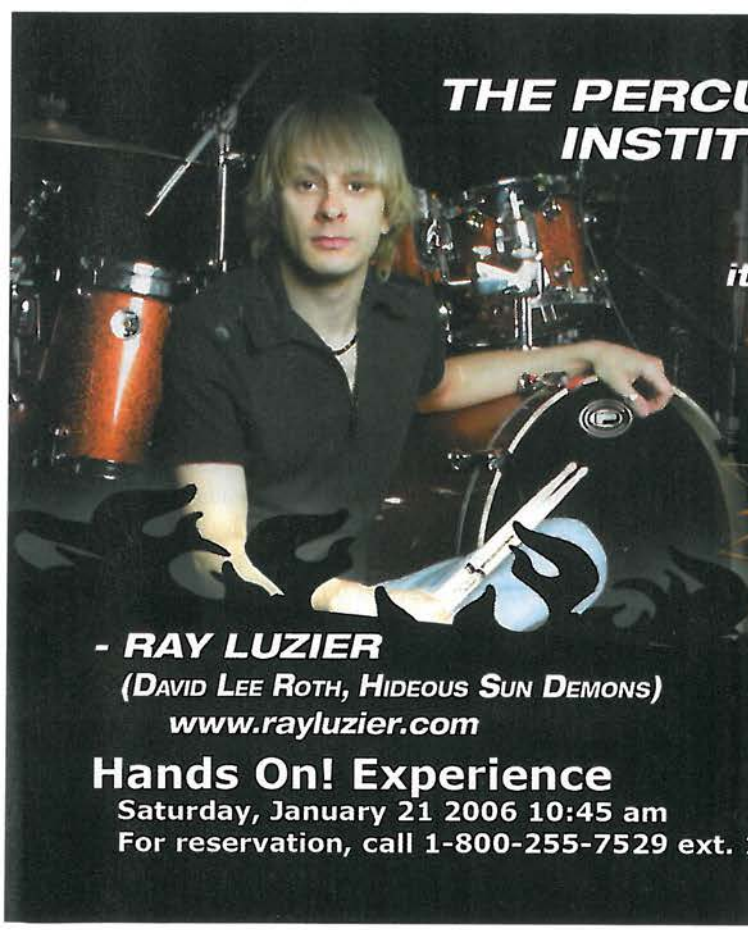

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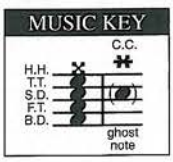
# Developing Great-Sounding Students

## One Beat At A Time

*by John Xepoleas*

**Teachers, would you like to develop great-sounding students who have a large vocabulary of grooves, good time, and a musical approach to drumming? If so, you might find the information in this article to be helpful.**

At an initial drum lesson, I'll ask my new students to play a few simple, solid grooves. Quite often, after playing one or two beats, they'll start to draw a blank. Then I'll ask them to play one of those beats in four-bar phrases, using a fill to set up each new phrase. At this point, the students usually respond with a blank stare followed by the question, "What's a four-bar phrase?" That reaction has led me to create an approach to teaching that focuses on developing a catalog of grooves and fills, how to play in musical phrases, and how to develop a musical tone—three *essential* components of a great-sounding drummer.

### Developing A Beat Catalog

Having a catalog of beats is essential for every drummer. And to build this catalog, various beats and fills must be memorized and practiced repeatedly, so they become *internalized*. Only when a beat or fill is internalized will it be readily available to apply in a musical setting.

For the best results, assign your students one beat per week, and have them memorize it. With this method, your students will be much more successful at building a catalog of internalized beats than students who are asked to learn an entire page of beats for each lesson. The latter students may be able to read the rhythms correctly, but the grooves will not become a part of their beat catalog to be applied in real musical situations.

### Finding A Source

Aside from the few examples included in this lesson, where do you find beats to teach your students? Well, you can get great-sounding grooves from a variety of sources, but beats from classic songs are always a good choice. You can either transcribe the grooves from recordings or find them contained in various transcription books. For this purpose I wrote a book called *Style Studies For The Creative Drummer* (Alfred Music). The first three pages include a variety of basic grooves from songs recorded over the past fifty years. But regardless of the source, be sure the patterns you choose can be applied to a variety of musical settings.

### Focal Points For Practice

Once you've transcribed and assigned a beat, and your students have a handle on the basic coordination involved, have them focus on the *tone* they are getting out of the kit. Here are a few things for your students to think about that will help improve their sound.

**1. Focus on the bass drum.** Is the sound punchy and solid? Is the tone consistent for each stroke? Are you playing into the head or letting the beater rebound?

**2. Focus on the snare drum.** Are you striking the drum in the exact same spot each time? Is the snare drum volume consistent from stroke to stroke? Is the volume between the bass drum and snare balanced?

**3. Focus on the hi-hat.** Are you keeping the tension between the cymbals consistent? Are you using the same part of the stick (shoulder, tip) for each stroke? Are you striking the hi-hat on the edge or on the top?

### Phrasing Practice

Once your students have memorized the assigned beat, can play it consistently, and are getting a good tone, have them play the beat in four-bar phrases. Why four-bar phrases, you ask? We practice in four-bar phrases because the vast majority of Western music, including pop, rock, jazz, funk, and blues, is written in four-bar phrases. Whether you're talking about a thirty-two-bar jazz standard, an eight-bar intro, a sixteen-bar verse, or a twelve-bar blues, you're inevitably dealing with groups of four-bar phrases. In fact, if a section of music is not in four-bar phrases, it's an exception to the norm.

### Eight-Week Lesson Plan

Here's an example of how to structure two months of lessons that will build your students' beat catalog, improve their tone, and increase their sense of phrasing.

**Week 1:** Start each student with a basic rock beat. Have them play the beat in four-bar phrases with a cymbal crash at the beginning of each new phrase. (See Example 1.) The beat should be played from memory.

1

**Week 2:** Change to a new groove, and add a simple 16th-note fill on the last beat of the fourth bar. Be sure that your students are clear where the groove ends and where the fill starts.

2

**Week 3:** Assign a new pattern, adding a 16th-note fill on the last two beats of the fourth bar.

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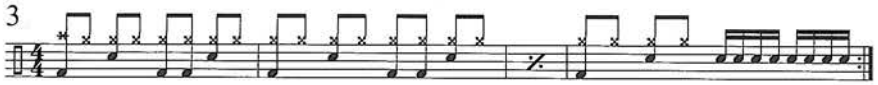
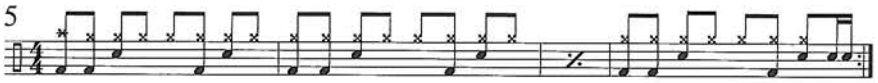

**Week 4:** Add another beat, and incorporate a full-measure fill in the fourth bar.

4

**Week 5:** Have your students memorize a new beat and play this standard fill.

5

**Week 6:** Assign a new beat and expand on the previous fill.

6

**Weeks 7 and 8:** As long as your students are successfully internalizing each new groove and fill, continue adding to their beat catalog. But don't be afraid to spend more than one week per beat if your students need the extra practice. Here are two more beats and fills that are a little more complex.

7

8

After eight weeks of this type of practice, your students will have a good grasp on four-bar phrases and will be well on their way to building a catalog of simple, solid beats and fills. Just remember: It doesn't matter how many beats and fills your students can play, but how *well* they play the ones they know.

*John Xepoleas performs and teaches in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has three books published by Alfred Music,* Lessons With The Greats Vols. I and II *and* Style Studies For The Creative Drummer. *Check out John's Web site, www.JohnXdrums.com.*

# Perfect Practice

## Making The Most Of Every Minute

*by Brad Taylor*

**"Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect." Those words, spoken by legendary football coach Vince Lombardi, apply to drummers as much as they do to professional football players.**

*Illustration by Joe King*

Detailed analysis of my own practice habits, along with feedback from and observations of my students, has shown me that many drummers don't make the most of their practice sessions. This article looks at vital practice techniques in drumming, discusses how to create a worthwhile practice session, and provides you with a template to customize your own perfect practice.

### Practice With A Plan

Regardless of the total time that you have available to practice, you need to plan the use of that time wisely. You need to analyze your practice sessions and devote time to what will make you a better musician. Special-team plays in football are not crucial enough to devote entire team practices to them. The same can be said for working only on cool grooves and fills in drumming. Variety and focus are the name of the game: variety to keep your playing fresh, unique, and vibrant, focus to highlight important areas and zero in on your weaknesses.

I cannot stress too highly the importance of practicing for long periods with a metronome or click track. The metronome is a drummer's best friend. In fact, if you're a beginner, I recommend going to sleep with the metronome clicking away in your ear at a comfortable 120 bpm. Okay, I'm kidding—but you get the idea.

If you're just starting out on drums—or even if you've been playing for a few years, but you're not satisfied with your ability—I'll wager that you don't practice to a metronome. Heed my advice and you'll be thanking me, as will your family and your bandmembers. Two weeks of dedicated metronome practice by a beginner equals a vastly improved drummer. Players with more experience will also see positive results, especially in the fluidity of their grooves and the consistency of their tempo as they move in and out of fills.

### Breaking It Down

So, what things are important to practice? The only way to answer that question is to evaluate your own abilities and goals. Ideally, you know what you need to work on, or you have a qualified drum instructor who can help you put your practice priorities in the right place.

The accompanying chart shows a sample practice routine with percentage breakdowns that can be

I'm often asked, "How long should I practice?" I usually respond with, "How good do you want to be?"

| Practice | Percentage | Time Spent* |
|---|---|---|
| Warm-Up | 10% | 12 minutes |
| Rudiments (with metronome) | 20% | 24 minutes |
| Groove (with metronome) | 30% | 36 minutes |
| Fills (with metronome) | 20% | 24 minutes |
| Challenge | 10% | 12 minutes |
| Experiment | 10% | 12 minutes |
| Total | 100% | 120 minutes |

*Based on a two-hour practice session

applied to however much time you have available to practice. Think of it as a starting template to be modified to your own needs. Let's look at each item on the chart.

**Warm-up:** I like to hold a single-stroke roll for three minutes, then play a buzz roll with and without accents for another three minutes. A great exercise for warming up your legs and feet is to set a metronome to a slow tempo, like 80 bpm, and play a progression of quarter notes, 8th notes, 8th-note triplets, and finally 16th notes with each foot.

The warm-up should be exercises that warm *you* up best. Remember to be controlled and focused on your technique while exercising all the muscles of your arms and legs. And please note that you should have already done some stretching beforehand.

**Metronome rudiments:** Work on all the standard rudiments. They are the language of drummers. Would you play in a band with a guitarist who didn't know chords? I suggest that you pick one or two rudiments at a time and master them, alone and also applied to the kit with simple sticking.

**Metronome groove:** Don't just play grooves you can already play well. Work on stretching yourself musically. Jazz and Latin grooves are full of wonderful examples of complex beats that will challenge your chops. Remember to play slowly. Fast, sloppy practice is a waste of your time. The goal is to program the neurons of your brain and the muscles of your shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers, and legs to memorize the actions needed to control your sticks and pedals.

**Metronome fills:** Start with a simple groove, and then work some fills into specified sections of it. For example, a standard format is three bars of groove followed by a one-bar fill. Experiment with other breakdowns of groove and fill length. Again, set the metronome to a slow tempo, and mind the clicks. A common problem among drummers is speeding up through the fill and not landing cleanly on the downbeat when the fill ends and the groove begins again.

**Challenge:** This is where you push yourself and your abilities to reach that next peak. Have your double-stroke rolls been sounding like popping popcorn lately? Here's your chance to iron them out. Hold a double-stroke roll for ten minutes.

For a different sort of challenge, grab a lick from the latest issue of *Modern Drummer*. Master it at a slow tempo, then work it up to speed.

**Experiment**: The time you spend on experimentation can really be devoted to anything. Work on a drum solo, go through all the possible accents on a paradiddle, play with your non-dominant hand on the hi-hat, or tune your radio to a polka station and play along. Just focus on being creative.

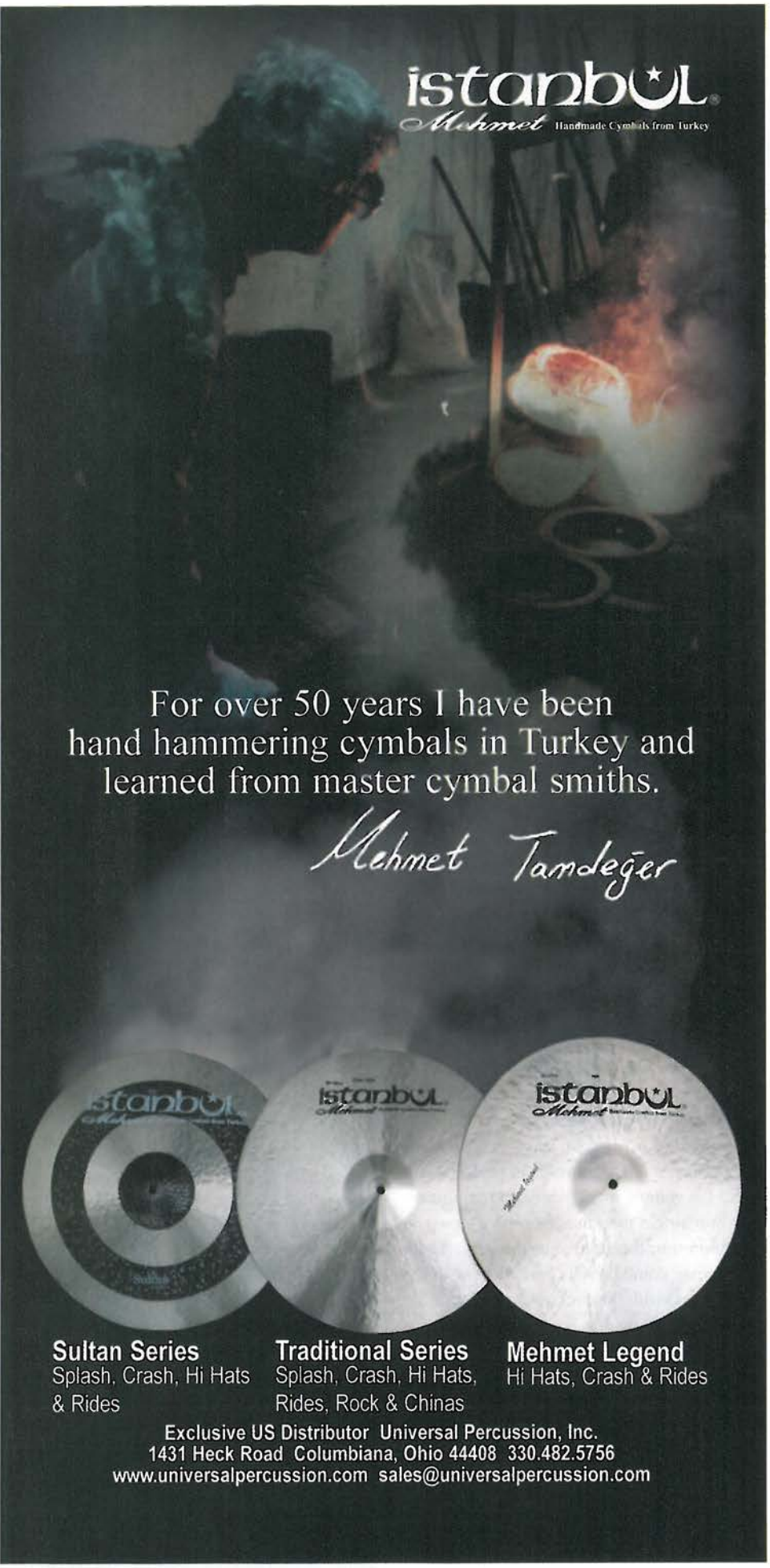
### Other Important Practice Areas

There are too many important aspects of drumming to include them all in a short article. But they should certainly be included in your practice planning. These include:

**Dynamic levels:** Dynamics are the key to playing like a pro. An easy exercise for developing your dynamics is to take fills and build the volume from pianissimo to fortissimo in a single measure, then back down to pianissimo in the following measure. There are infinite combinations here, both with the volume and with the sticking you use.

**Sight reading:** Put some sheet music on your stand and play it. It can be a drumset or snare piece—whatever you fancy. Just make sure it's something you don't already know, so that it challenges your reading skills.

**Listening:** Every musician must be able to focus on the other musicians in the ensem-




ble and really hear what they're playing. One way to hone this skill is by listening to recorded music and playing along. A common mistake is only listening to what you enjoy. Don't be afraid to put on all genres of music and develop an ear for them. You never know when your next high-paying gig might come from a country band.

**Stamina:** Many books have been written on building stamina. Work from your favorite one, or develop your own exercises. Stamina is a very important quality to maintain. It's one thing to be able to play a groove for a few measures; your goal should be the ability to play that groove all day long.

### Put In The Time

I'm often asked, "How long should I practice?" I usually respond with, "How good do you want to be? How much natural talent do you have? What are your goals as a drummer? Do you consider drumming a hobby or an art?" The bottom line is that if you want to drop peoples' jaws with your playing—and you were not blessed with the raw talent of a Buddy Rich or a Dennis Chambers—you need to put in a lot of time practicing.

There've been periods of months when I've practiced upwards of six hours a day. During other periods I might get in only two hours. If you start practicing this much, you'll likely find that on those days when you can only practice for two hours, you feel bad. So you'll grab your pad and work on ratamacues for another thirty minutes before you go to bed.

The key is to practice every day for as long as you can. No matter the level at which you start, over time you will become a much better player. Drumming is an ancient art form. And, as with any art form, the more you sharpen your skills, the easier it becomes to express your feelings through the instrument.

Very few master drummers are born. The majority create themselves through diligent practice. Play hard, and practice perfectly!

*Brad Taylor plays a stand-up kit in The Boneshakers of Sarasota, Florida. He has studied with Gordy Knudtsen, Dave Stanoch, and Randy Koons.*

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# Creating A Crickets Kit

## Rock 'N' Roll Had A Buddy, Too

*by Harry Cangany*

**A few years ago I was in Lubbock, Texas, caught up in the groundswell of activity surrounding the impending opening of the Buddy Holly Center. This shrine to one of the greats of rock 'n' roll would house items of memorabilia from Buddy and his band, The Crickets. Along with the stage clothes, the photos, and the contracts, the Center would exhibit Buddy's sunburst Fender Stratocaster and Joe B. Mauldin's Fender bass.**

But where were the drums? What kind of a display would it be without J.I. Allison's Premiers or WFLs?

I contacted Allison about this. He told me that the Premiers had gone to a nephew (who sold them), and the WFLs had been traded years ago in Los Angeles. So I made it my mission to find a replica drumkit for the display. I could say that I took on this mission because I've had great times with J.I., with Connie Gibbons of the Buddy Holly Center, and with all the kind folks in Lubbock, and I just wanted to do something to help.

But let's face it—I was obsessed.

### The Search Begins

I reasoned that in my little corner of the vintage drum world it would be easier to find a WFL set than a Premier. So I began the hunt. I wanted to find four white marine pearl drums that were built in late 1957. J.I.'s set had been purchased new in December of that year, in New York City.

Armed with photos, I began the quest to find the correct drums and hardware. I never did find the correct-size bass drum (12x22), but I did find everything else, including original stands. (I was *really* obsessed.)

We purchased twelve drums before I decided that enough was enough. I should never have tried to match old white marine pearl. Some drums with that finish stay white over time. But then there are the rest...the ones that could more accurately be described as yellow, lemon yellow, green, yellow-green, maize, mustard, butterscotch, bile...well, you get the point.

I told Ryan Payne, who was my assistant at the Drum Center Of Indianapolis at the time, "Find the

The WFL replica kit

The Premier replica kit

worst color choices and re-cover them. The rest can be re-sold." Of course, you can't just remove the marine pearl covering from old mahogany shells. You have to burn it off. It's a delicate and time-consuming operation. But that was okay with me. I was really, *really* obsessed.

### Off With The Old... On With The New

Even after we got the old covering off, we were faced with a dilemma. Technically, the old WFL/Ludwig white marine pearl material didn't exist any longer. The "modern" choice is a blue-tinted version that Precision Drum Company calls Vintage Sky Blue. So Ryan Payne selected a 14x22 bass drum, a 9x13 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5½x14 snare drum from our purchased stock of mismatched drums, and we covered them with the new material.

We then went over the metal parts and chose the items that needed help. Assorted hoops, lugs, claws, T-rods, tom legs, brackets, and the snare strainer and butt plate all went into the plating vat. The object was to make this set look like it was ready to relive its debut on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on December 1, 1957.

Before we were ready for the proud moment, we called our friends at United Rawhide in Chicago. We wanted calfskin heads, because that's what J.I. Allison used. Then we called our friends at Fibes Drums, who created beautiful new bass-drum hoops, using the ½" inlay material that we provided. (Keep repeating to yourself: "Details, details, details....")

We forwarded photos of the finished kit to J.I. for his approval. After he called me and told me that we had passed the test, I made a videotape of the set and sent it to Connie Gibbons of the Buddy Holly Center so that the re-assembly could be easy.

### And Then...

Of course, as soon as the replica WFL kit was proudly ensconced in the Buddy Holly Center, the inevitable happened: We found a 1950s metric-sized Premier kit just like J.I.'s. That set, now recovered in beautiful white marine pearl, made the trip to West Texas to join the WFL set. Every little nut and bolt is correct, every stand is exact...and our hearts and souls are there, with our best wishes.

So now that you know the story of the drums in the Buddy Holly Center, go down to Lubbock and visit them. You can tell your friends about the crazy guy in Indiana who just kept muttering, "I'm doing this for rock 'n' roll."

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# Playing For The Room

## It's All About Adjustments

*by Jeremy Hummel*

**I was recently thinking back on the various venues I've performed in. After being fortunate enough to run the gamut from living rooms to arenas, an invaluable lesson I learned along the way was the importance of playing for the room.**

I like to think of a room, or a venue, as another instrument in the band. I believe that the room in which we're performing can—and should—dictate our approach to the drumkit. For example, the first time I had my drums set up for soundcheck in an empty arena, the first grooves I went for were "When The Levee Breaks" by Led Zeppelin and "I Love It Loud" by KISS. Arenas have a certain sound and atmosphere that just screams for big-sounding drums. On the opposite end of the spectrum, when playing in bars that were the size of a small living room, my playing tended to be more funky and intricate.

Playing for the room seems like common sense. Still, we've all heard situations where, depending on the environment at hand, the drummer's approach was anything but musical. Playing with the same level of dynamics no matter what the venue is like dressing in the same clothes through four seasons of weather: You're likely to be uncomfortable at least half the time.

For most gigging drummers out there, the size of the venue can change dramatically with each gig. Look at each room as a friend, and adapt accordingly.

*Playing with the same level of dynamics no matter what the venue is like dressing in the same clothes through four seasons of weather.*

### From The Top Down

Let's start with the big rooms: arenas down to larger-sized clubs. Also included in this category are halls that may not be large in capacity, but present a similar acoustic situation. You know...those concrete buildings that were once factories or warehouses but now act as a club.

Subtleties such as ghost notes, ruffs, quick sticking patterns, and dynamic bass drum work are nearly inaudible in "boomy" rooms. It's in venues such as these that we can allow the primal aspect of drumming to take over. I'm not saying to forgo *all* sense of musicality, but here's a chance to release the beast within and have loads of fun just slammin' some solid time.

Middle-sized clubs are where things start to get more challenging. In the mid-sized venues, you can start to employ an "in between" approach. You can still rock out and hit the drums hard, but dynamics become more of a factor.

Playing for the room becomes an art form as the venues get smaller. I know a lot of musicians who dread gigs where the band sets up in the corner and there's barely enough room for a waitress to maneuver between the tables. Still, these gigs can be fun for drummers. Granted, we might not get to take out the aggressions of the day and destroy the drumkit. But I find great satisfaction in exploring all the subtleties and sonic nuances that our instrument has to offer. And this exploration simply cannot be pursued at high volume levels.

Years ago I played in a blues trio whose gigs were primarily in small local bars. Each night I was called upon to do a solo. (Cool, right?) Back then I played a four-piece kit with just a crash, a ride, and a set of hats. But in those small rooms, the sound possibilities from my drums seemed endless. I could mute the drums with my hands, turn the snares off for a more tribal sound, strike the drums in places other than the center, and explore all the colors of the cymbals from the edge to the bell. The size of the room itself presented me with the opportunity to do all this.

### Well Yeah, But...

Right now I know a lot of drummers out there are saying to themselves, "That's fine for jazz or softer music. But what about hard rock and heavy metal?" Well, I was in a rock band that played the same small bars as the blues band, performing tunes like "Everlong" by Foo Fighters and "Blind" by Korn. And while I couldn't thrash about with wild abandon, I was able to hear what my bandmates were playing without having to struggle to do so. And that allowed me to learn more about the songs.

Playing at low to medium volume can help your band relearn the art of *listening*. Oftentimes, when we play at loud volumes, we're playing to be heard rather than to hear. We get involved in hearing only ourselves as we push our instrument to fill the room.

One of the challenges we drummers face when playing for the room in smaller venues is that because our instrument is an acoustic one, the "volume knob" is contained in our hands and feet. Guitarists, bassists, or keyboard players can simply turn down their rigs, while still being able to strike or strum their instruments with the same attack. We have to do the adjusting with our technique.

### It Goes For Everybody

Keep in mind that the idea of playing for the room means nothing unless the entire band follows the concept. And this begins with your own mindset and approach. Nine times out of ten a band's volume is determined by how loud the drummer is. Thus you have a good deal of control over the dynamics with which your band plays.

So the next time you're in a larger venue, by all means set free the Keith Moon inside of you. Who knows? The next night you might be feeling a bit more like Steve Gadd.

*Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release,* We Are Not Alone. *He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.*


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# Project Under Covers

## Creating A "New" Drumkit Without New-Drum Prices

*by Paul Mouton*

**At one time or another most drummers have entertained the idea of trading their current kit for a set with more modern features, a different configuration, or a different finish. Maybe that treasured vintage kit in the corner is faded and bears the wounds from years of gigs, making replacing it more appealing than ever. Unfortunately, the majority of musicians work day jobs to pay the bills. For those drummers, spending a few thousand dollars on a whim is more than impractical—it's impossible.**

Re-covering a drumset and updating its hardware is an often-overlooked, less-expensive solution to this dilemma. A new and completely different look can be achieved in a short amount of time, and at a fraction of the cost of that new set in the music store window.

### Decisions, Decisions

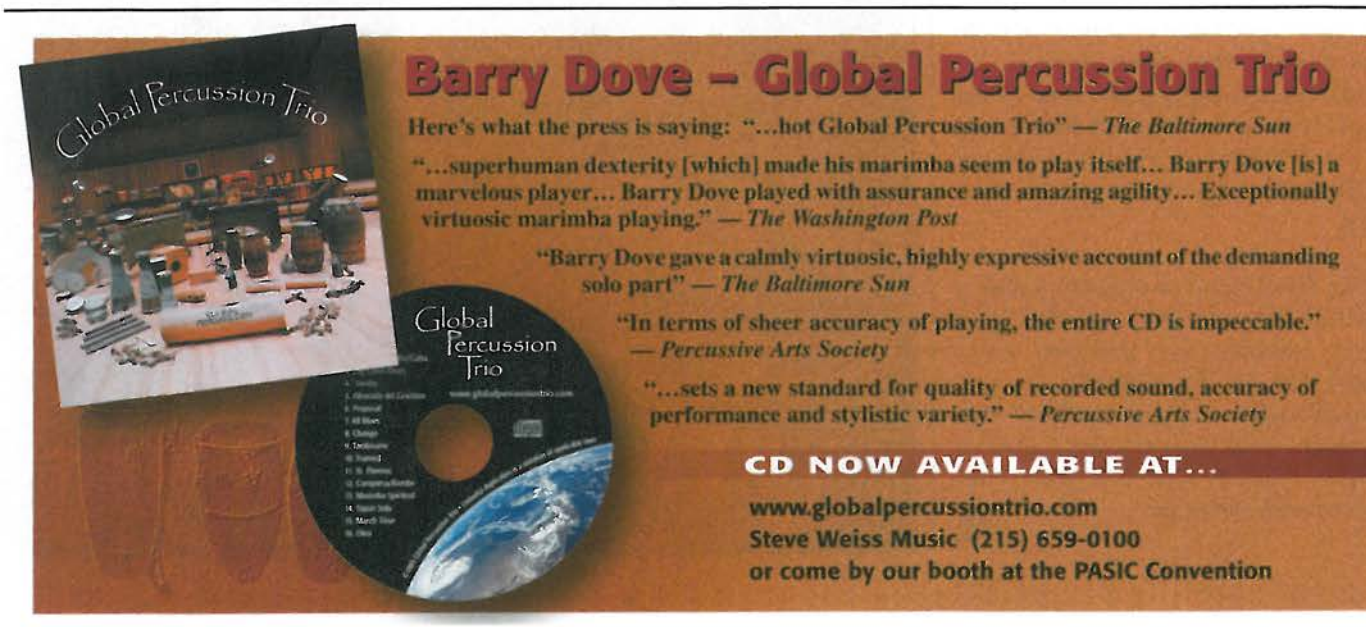
Before jumping into a project like this, the first thing to consider is set configuration. Are you satisfied with your current setup? Do you want different sizes? Do you want to add or eliminate drums? Or do you just want your old set to look new again?

If you feel that some of your drums are no longer needed, they can be stored for possible use later. Or they can be placed on an Internet auction block to help cover the expenses of your refurbishing job. Conversely, if one or two differently sized drums are needed to complete your "new" kit, you can usually find them on those same Internet auction sites—and at great prices. If you're lucky, the drum you need may even be sitting at a local pawnshop. So what if it has a few scratches and scuffs? You're going to be refurbishing it anyway.

### Some Words Of Caution

If you're thinking in terms of a completely new configuration and/or finish, you should consider whether re-covering is cost-effective. Get estimates on all the materials you'll need *before* you tear down the drums and start pulling off the old covering.

If hardware is being swapped out or refurbished, be sure that the new hardware is compatible with your drums. For example, the hole spacing for lugs differs depending on the make, model, and age of a kit. Everything



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should be measured and double-checked before you make any big purchases.

You may prefer to have a natural wood finish, rather than a covered one. Be aware that this is a much more labor-intensive proposition. Before you invest in any dyes or stains, remove the old covering material from all of the shells to be sure that the wood will take a stain properly. The surface of the shells must be fairly smooth and entirely free from all dried glue and adhesive residue. This means lots of cleaning and sanding the shells.

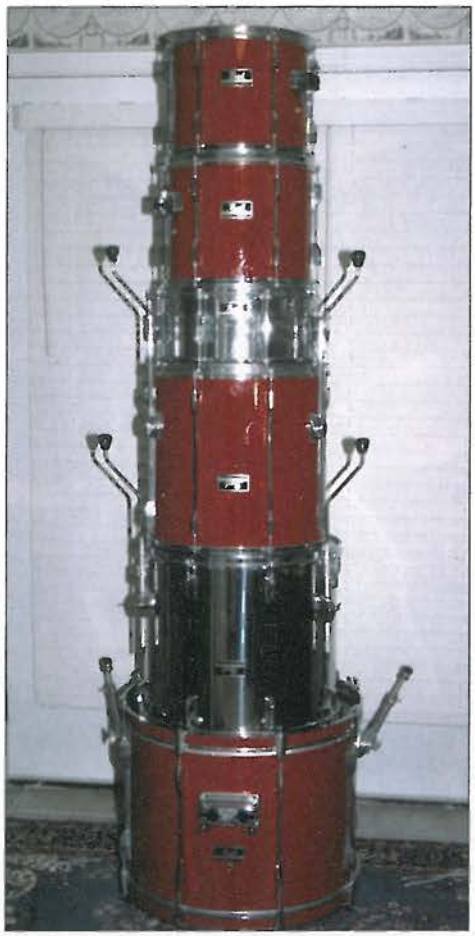
Wood veneers can be applied to the shells in order to change the type of wood that's visible. This can create a distinctive look, but it's usually quite expensive. Finally, clear lacquer (for multiple clear coats) can be purchased in spray cans.

### Wrappin' Em Up

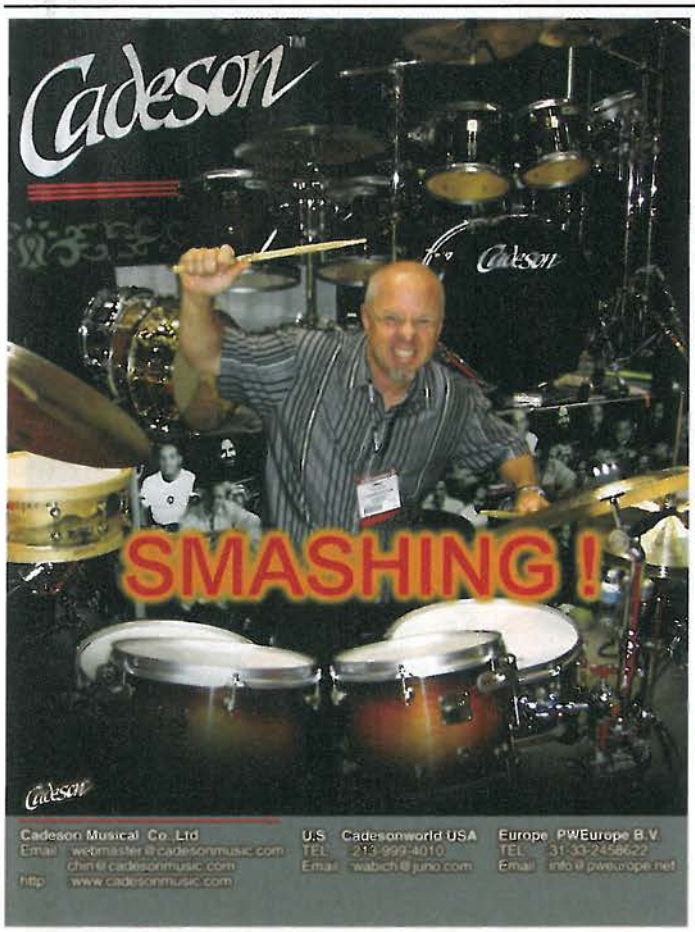
One of the major advantages to using new covering material is that you don't have to do nearly as much shell preparation. The surface must be smooth, to be sure. But you don't have to worry about residual glue in the wood grain, or cosmetic flaws. They're going to be covered by the wrap.

Many popular styles of drum covering material are available today, including solid colors, marbles, pearls, sparkles, and satins. They're sold in large sheets (which can be cut to size with a pair of heavy-duty scissors) and in smaller sheets pre-cut to the sizes of specific drums.

As a general note: When cutting covering material, the sheets should be cut about $^1/_4$" narrower than the overall depth of each shell, so that there is about $^1/_8$" of bare shell near each bearing edge. The drumheads and hoops will cover this



**You can easily make changes to your set configuration. Here, an 18" chrome-finish floor tom is added to the original set.**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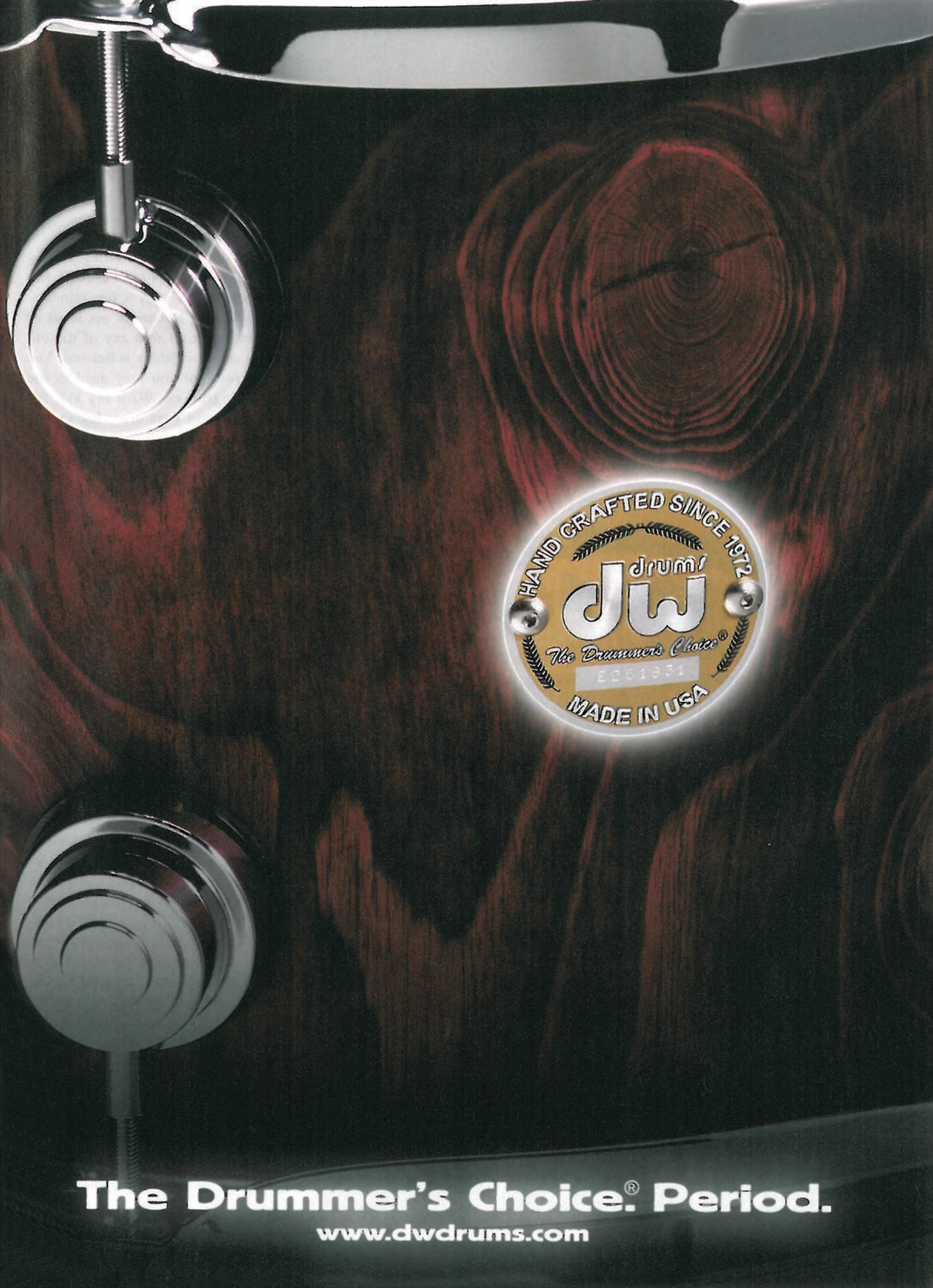


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area. Seams should have an overlapping area of about $1\frac{1}{2}$".

### A Practical Demonstration

By way of example, I'm going to describe a re-covering job that I undertook recently. I started with a five-piece, 1990s-era Pearl Export kit with a Cardinal Red finish. I added an 18" floor tom that I found at a pawnshop for next to nothing. That drum was covered in Pearl's chrome finish, and it sported an older lug design.

I wanted a vintage look, so I purchased Vintage Smoke Pearl covering material from Sam Barnard. The pre-cut sheets came fitted with mounting tape. (See the sidebar on page 122 for sources of covering material.)

Glue and contact cement can also be used to affix drum coverings. But these adhesives tend to be messy, and they can cause nightmares when it comes to re-covering or repairing the same shells again later. Besides, with more than twenty lug bolts also securing the covering, the drum will sound exactly the same using tape as using the other adhesives.

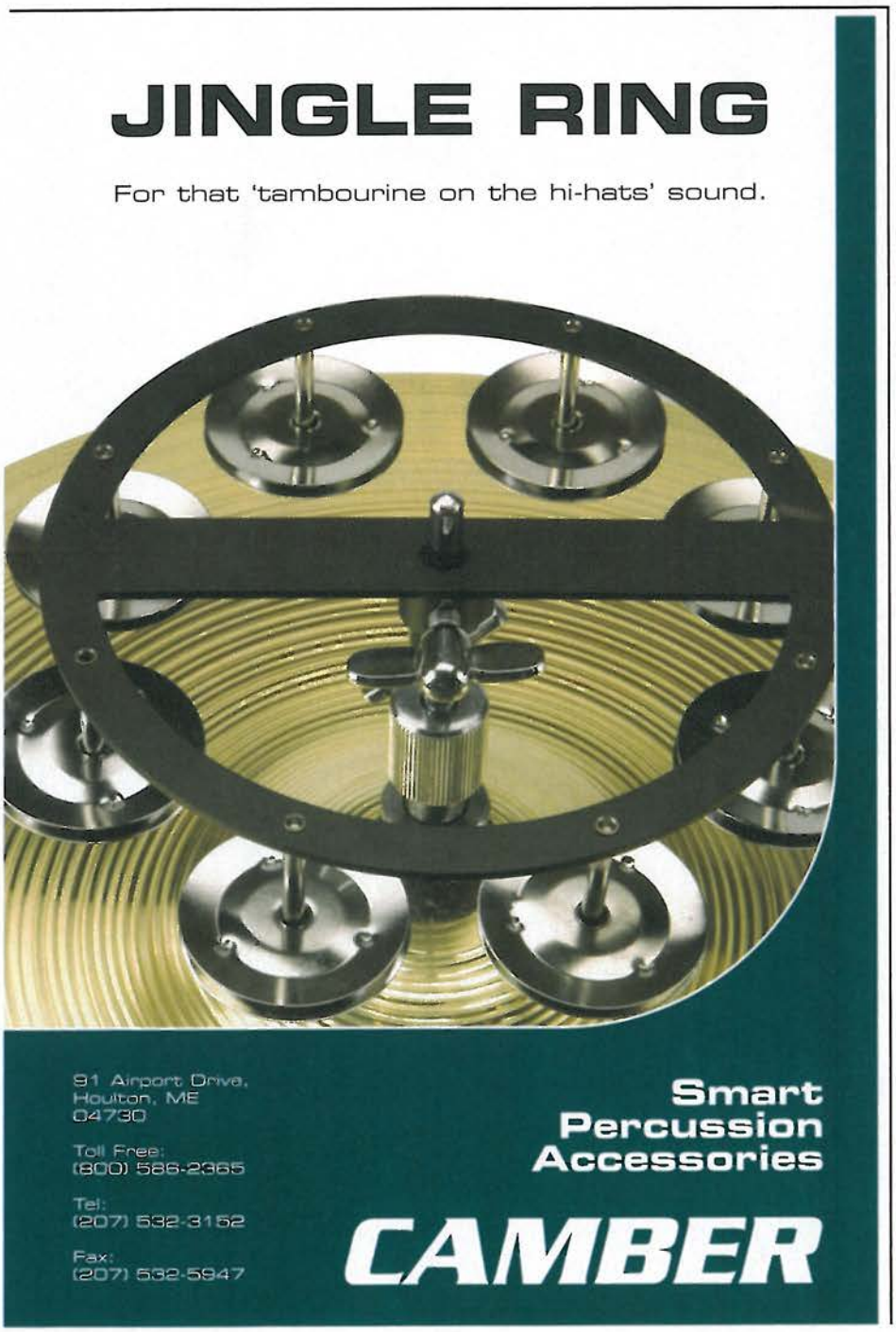
### Stripping Down

The first step in the re-covering process was to take all the hardware off the drums, which took only a few minutes. Even if you plan to change out some of the hardware, don't toss any of the old hardware until everything is finished. You never know what you may need as the project progresses. With my kit, for example, the old bass drum lug inserts were needed in the new lugs because the two were threaded differently. Also, most lug-mounting screws must be purchased separately due to varying shell thickness. You may be able to save time and money by using the old screws again (as was the case with my kit).

My toughest stripping operation was removing each air-hole grommet without marring the wood inside the drum. I used a small flat-blade screwdriver to pry up the tabs holding the grommet in place. Then I pulled the grommet out of the shell with pliers. Note: If your kit's logo badges are around the air holes, take care not to scratch or damage them, so that they can be used again. New $\frac{3}{8}$" replacement eyelets were included with my re-covering sheets, but different sizes and styles can also be purchased.

Once all the hardware was off, I used a large screwdriver to pry the old covering up at the seam. A putty knife can also aid in separating the covering from the shell—especially if adhesive was used all the way around the drum. A heat gun (or portable blow dryer) should be used to soften the old glue. Patience is the key here, because rushing may cause irreversible damage. Fortunately, on my Pearl kit only the seamed edges were adhered to the shells. Once they were pried loose, the covering peeled off easily.

I removed the logo badges from the old covering by prying them off with a putty knife. I worked the knife back and forth while keeping the material as flat as possible so that the badges wouldn't get bent out of shape.



Another note: Once the shell is bare, it's important to check for any raised spots that will cause the new covering to look bubbled or warped. Rough, raised spots should be block-sanded so as to remove them without creating flat spots on the shell. When the shell is smooth and round, the new covering can be applied.

### Covering Up

A clean, soft work surface is needed for applying coverings so that the drums won't get scratched or scuffed. Once I had such a surface set up, I placed each covering sheet around its drumshell (*before* exposing the double-stick tape) to ensure a good fit. Many drums are not perfectly round, but the covering should be reasonably tight nevertheless. Again, the covering should not extend all the way to the top and bottom edges of the shell.

On my kit I positioned the overlapping seam on the back side of each drum (facing me, away from the audience when mounted), with the seam running vertically between two lugs. You don't want the seam to wind up facing front when the drum is mounted, and it's easy to get disoriented with a shell that has no hardware. So use extra care here. Also, don't place the covering's edge right *on* the screw holes, because the lug-mounting screws may crack the edges, and drilling may raise them.

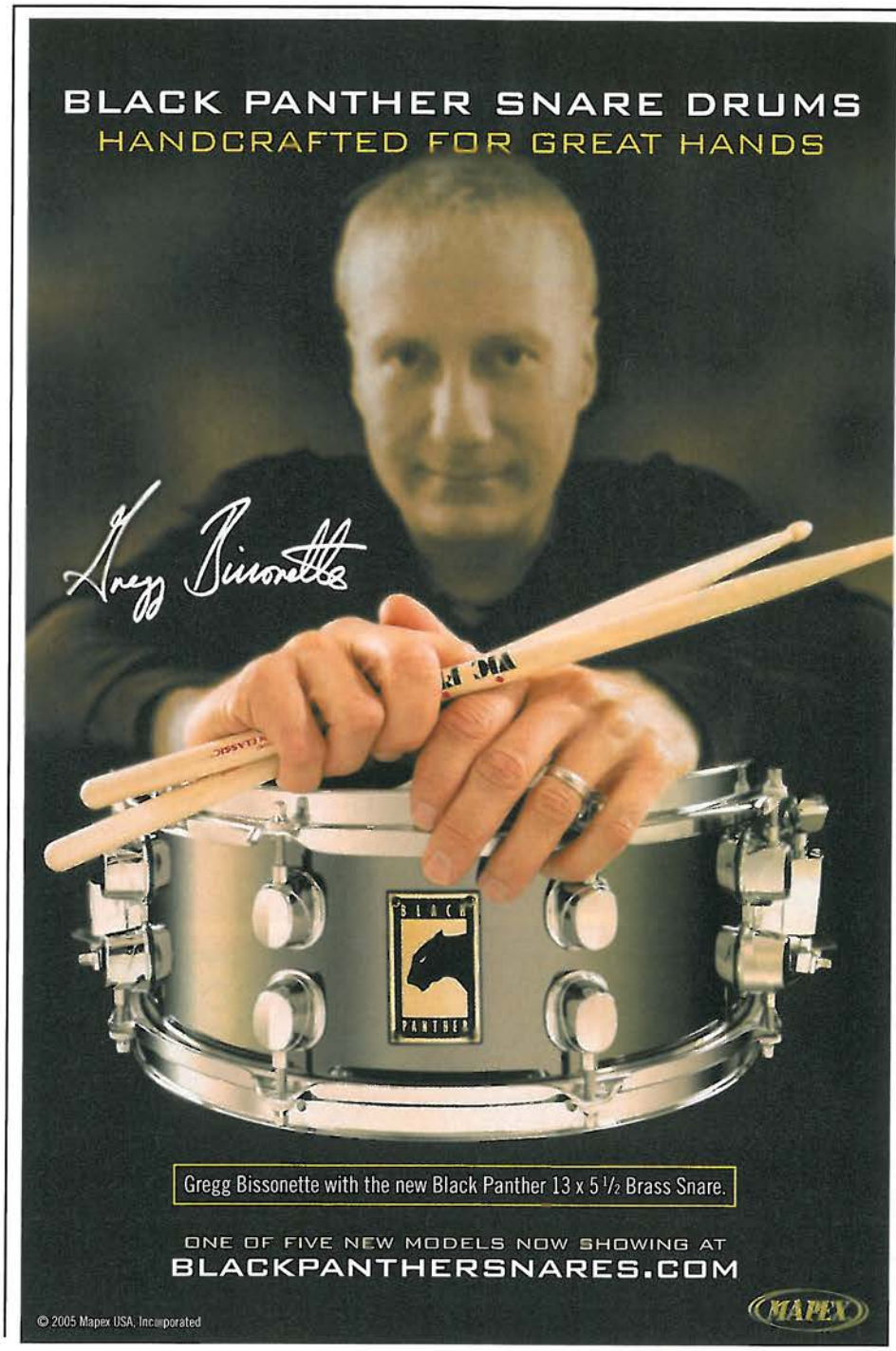
Once I had the covering sheet positioned on a shell, I placed a light pencil mark at the starting point. With the drum sitting on its side (like a wheel), I removed the paper backing on one edge of the covering, and lined the edge up with the pencil mark. I pressed each corner lightly with one finger to hold it in place while I checked the alignment. That way, if the overlapping section of the drum covering didn't line up while it was snug on the shell, I could lift a corner and make adjustments. Once the covering was flat, snug, and aligned, I pressed the edge firmly all the way across to ensure that it would stay in place.

There was a clear protective coating on my covering material. It had to be peeled back far enough from the first secured edge so that it wouldn't be under the overlapped part of the second edge.

With one edge secured to the shell, I rolled the drum onto the covering, to the halfway point. I then pulled the other edge up tightly and placed it into the correct position. I peeled off the adhesive backing and pressed the edge firmly into place. Then I replaced the clear plastic layer in order to protect the finish from damage during the rest of the project.

Most of the drum covering sheets I used were single pieces for each drum. However, the 18" floor tom and the 22" bass drum required two-piece coverings. In these cases smaller strips went on the back side of the tom and the bottom of the bass drum, while larger pieces wrapped around the rest of each drum. This created two seams on each of the drums, but they were hardly noticeable.

Once all of the shells were covered, I let them sit for a couple of days so that the adhesive could cure and strengthen properly. This would help prevent the edges and



seams from raising while I was drilling holes for the hardware.

### Final Touches

Since all of the hardware was off of the shells while the coverings were "curing," I took that opportunity to give all of the lugs and rims a good cleaning and polishing. Then it was time to drill the holes in the covering for the re-installation of the hardware.

The best way to drill the holes is from the inside, while the shell lies on a smooth block of wood covered with a couple of layers of masking tape. The hole in the shell will guide the drill bit, and the block of wood will receive the bit while ensuring that the covering material remains flat and snug against the shell. However, drilling from the inside should *not* be attempted when the diameter of the shell is too small to allow the drill to be operated vertically. You don't want to be drilling the holes at an angle.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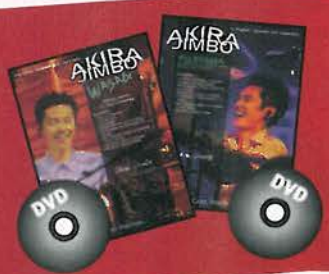


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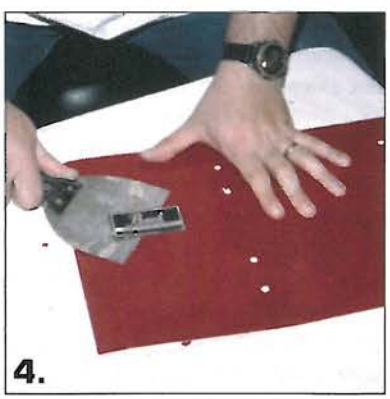
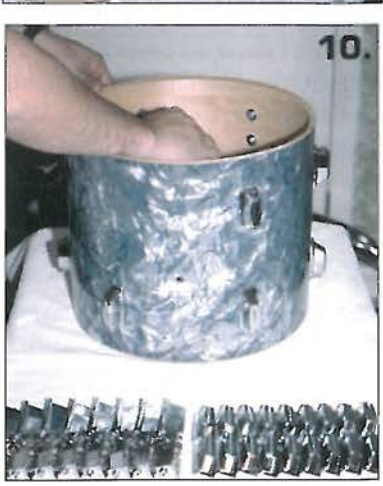
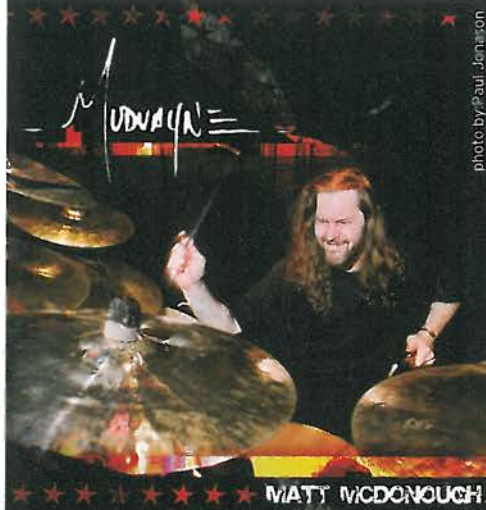
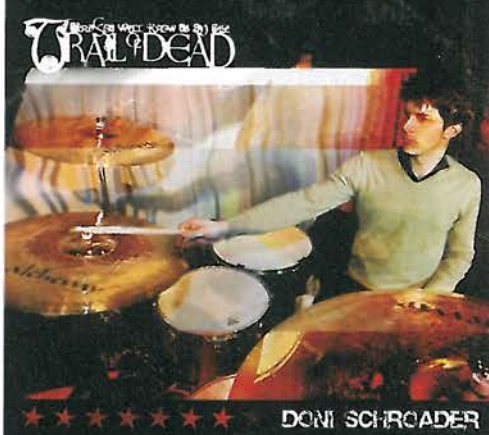




# The Process

1. First, remove the heads and hardware.
2. Air-hole grommets often must be removed from the inside.
3. The original wrap must be pried off, starting at the seam, without damaging the wood underneath.
4. Many badges can be pried from the old covering without causing damage.
5. A pencil mark will aid you in finding the starting point for the new wrap. But make sure that the final seam will run down the back of the drum.
6. The backing for the mounting tape is peeled away, and the edge of the covering material is attached to the shell.
7. The new covering should be pulled tightly into place before the seams are permanently affixed.
8. Pressing the seam firmly all the way across will ensure a tight bond.
9. Whenever possible, the holes in the covering should be drilled from the inside.
10. Once the holes are drilled, the hardware, badges, air-hole grommets, rims, hoops, and heads can be replaced.

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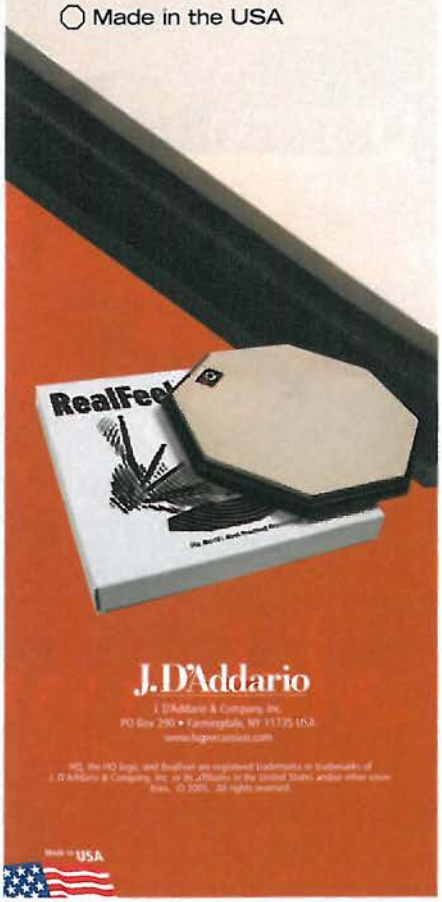


If there is no protective plastic over the covering material, it's still best to drill from inside the shell. Place the shell where it will not become scratched during the drilling process. Putting the shell between two tables of the same height and about 10" apart works well.

When the drum is positioned and ready for drilling, let the drill do all of the work. Forcing the drill bit forward may cause the covering material to lift away from the shell and look bubbled. Once this happens, there's no way to correct it. Use a sharp drill bit, light pressure, and plenty of patience.

When drilling from the outside of a shell is absolutely necessary, a nail can aid you in finding the correct spot at which to drill. The nail can score the covering from the inside so that the mark can be seen from the outside. Then an indentation can be made in that outside mark to keep the drill bit in place. For extra insurance, a heated nail held with pliers can melt through the finish from the inside, providing a guide hole that can then be used while drilling from the outside. This is important since a drill bit that wanders off its mark can cause serious damage to a new finish.

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Once all of the necessary holes have been drilled and the protective coating has been peeled away, the old hardware and eyelets can be replaced (and any new additions can be installed). On my set, I changed the original Export lugs to match those on the older floor tom, which allowed more of the shell to be visible. I also added suspension tom mounts, as well as black bass drum hoops. I purchased all of the new hardware from Andy Foote at Drum Supply House USA. All that was left was to stick the logo badges on (with mounting tape) and replace the heads.

By the way, when you're re-installing the hardware, it's very important to tighten the screws until they are snug...and no tighter. Overtightening will cause the wood to compress and the coverings to raise and warp around the hardware. Once the split washers have flattened and the screws feel snug, *stop*. Loose screws should not be a problem thereafter, because you should check the screws every time you change a head.

### A New Look

*Voila!* My Export drumkit assumed a whole new (and, dare I say, more expensive-looking) identity. It took only a few days, and it cost $243 for the covering, $84 for fifty-six replacement lugs, $59 for two suspension tom mounts, and $29 for two black bass drum hoops—for a grand total of $415.

Compare that to the cost of a brand-new, similar six-piece kit these days. And besides saving money, I have the sense of pride that comes with knowing that I created this new-looking kit myself. You can't put a price on that!

### Do-It-Yourself Sources

The companies listed below offer traditional drum covering material, as well as replacement parts such as lugs, tension rods, and drum rims. Several also offer ready-made recovering kits and instructions. In addition, RockenWraps (www.rockenwraps.com) offers a non-traditional wrap material that comes in a variety of digitally created graphic designs. Contact the companies directly for further information.

**American Music Drum Parts:** www.amdrumparts.com
**Drumcover.com:** www.drumcover.com
**Drum Supply House:** www.drummaker.com
**Precision Drum Company:** www.precisiondrum.com
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# Matt Walker

## Embracing The Past, But Thinking Forward

Story by Gail Worley • Photos by Bjorn Thorsrud

**Known primarily in rock circles as a touring and session drummer for bands like Filter, Smashing Pumpkins, and Garbage, Matt Walker has made his reputation by being able to integrate acoustic and electronic elements while never losing sight of the all-important groove.**

Walker is equally at home programming beats. And whether he's playing a standard acoustic four-piece or an elaborate electronic kit, all that matters to him is that he's *playing*.

Walker's drumming is forceful and supportive, yet always in the moment, whether he's playing a blues shuffle or improvising on a thirty-minute industrial meltdown for an arena crowd with Smashing Pumpkins. Imagine the rock-solid snap and fiery attack of Steve Jordan, the clever, snaky fills of Stewart Copeland, and the understated simplicity and grace of Charlie Watts, and you gain an understanding of the firepower this hardworking drummer is capable of unleashing.

Walker began his drumming education with a serious schooling in the blues, courtesy of his father, blues pianist "Chicago Carl" Snyder. "First and foremost," says Matt, "my dad taught me to be steady and hold down the groove. But he also taught me to not *think* and to just use my ears."

While Matt benefited greatly from regular blues jam sessions with his dad and brother, bassist Solomon Snyder, he was also deeply immersed in jazz and classical training in school. "I was really fortunate to be involved with an exceptional high school program," he asserts. "I think that had a huge impact on my career. I had a chamber orchestra class each morning before school, and then I stayed after school for either a classroom jam session with my friends or to work on a school play. They also started offering an after-school program of improvisational jazz classes with some rather formidable jazz musicians from the Chicago scene. These players took a handful of kids and showed us how to play standards and improvise like professional musicians. My high school days were fairly long and intense."

After graduation, Matt came up in the Chicago blues scene, playing club gigs and touring. "The more blues gigs I did," says the drummer, "the more I learned this 'secret language' of musicians. The amazing thing about the blues is that you can get a call in the afternoon for a gig that night. Then you show up and you've got four guys who've never played together. But if everybody knows these unspoken rules of the game, you can play all night. I think that's really amazing, and I don't know that there's anything else like it. To this day, I'm utilizing the lessons I learned from playing Chicago blues clubs."

Gigs
Billy Corgan
Smashing Pumpkins
Garbage
Filter

"at this point in my life, i go for the most tone. so i use the tb medium clear for my solo performances, in the studio or for my own projects. but there are times when the music calls for a more powerful approach (like live with jeff beck) that's when i switch to the 2-ply. I found it has a similar rich-full tone and sustain but is a much stronger, more durable head." - Terry Bozzio

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Walker credits his high profile in the Chicago blues scene with landing his first major break into the rock world. "At the time I got the call to audition for Filter's first tour in 1994, I was playing out five nights a week," he recalls. "The band asked around town for drummer recommendations, and my name came up a lot because I was in so many different circles."

Matt landed the Filter gig and the band was later tagged for the opening slot on The Smashing Pumpkins' European tour supporting 1995's *Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness*. "About a month after that tour ended," Matt explains, "The Pumpkins needed a drummer to sit in for Jimmy [Chamberlin]. I seemed like a good choice because not only was I a huge fan, but we had also become friends on that tour, and I'd actually sat in with them. I was really familiar with what they were doing live."

Matt joined The Pumpkins in mid-1996 and continued to tour with the band for two years. He also recorded the majority of drum parts for 1998's *Adore*. (Kenny Aronoff played on the *Adore* tour before Chamberlin eventually re-joined the group.)

After his time with the Pumpkins, Matt formed the power pop band Cupcakes with his brother Solomon and two longtime Chicago friends. The group was signed to Dreamworks Records, and released one album in 2000. Staying busy with various sessions and live projects over the past few years, Walker now finds himself working again with Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan. Matt served as "a creative sounding board" and assisted with drum programming on Corgan's recently released solo debut, *The Future Embrace*. Currently he's touring the world as part of Corgan's live band.

The Corgan tour gives Matt an opportunity to put the electronic aspect centerstage in a new, unusual way—beginning with the construction of his kit, which abandons the traditional drum hardware for steel arms that resemble the stems of a futuristic, metallic flower. And one more thing: He plays the kit standing up.

*Modern Drummer* caught up with Walker between tour stops to discuss the unique aspects of his current gig and the continuing evolution of his drumming career.

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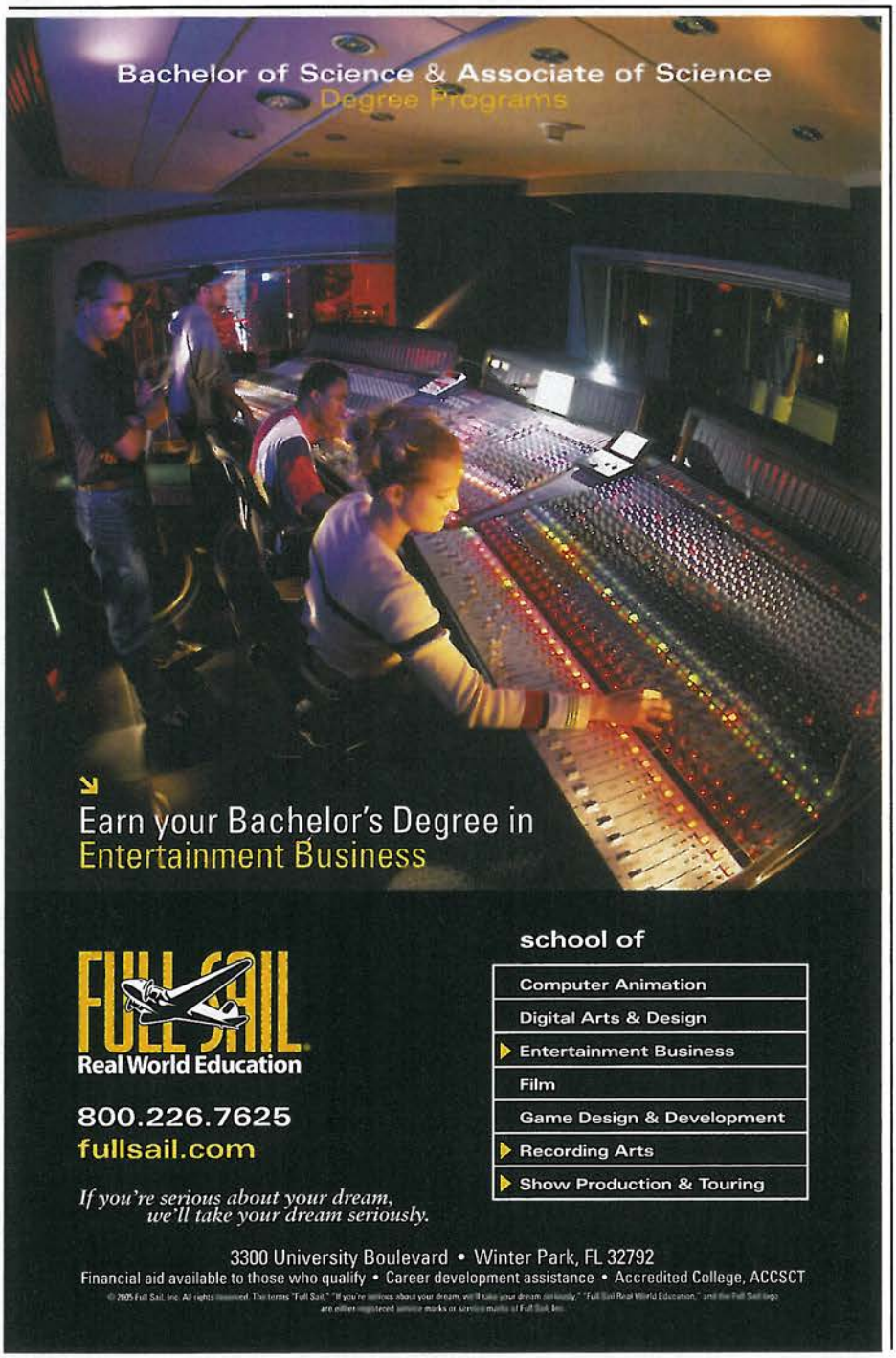
**MD:** Your drumming is so stylistically versatile. Who are some of your drumming influences?

**Matt:** Certain drummers influence me simply by how they work in the context of their band, a great example being Charlie Watts. People underestimate how unique it is for such feel to translate in recordings. Every Rolling Stones record has these great serendipitous moments in the drums, vocals, and bass. When you listen to the radio today, you don't hear that kind of interaction at all.

When I've taught drums in the past, the first player I recommend drummers listen to is Pete Thomas from The Attractions, if only for the way he composes his parts. They're *always* interesting and right on, every time. Pete's got the greatest sound, style, and feel. Every song is a small drumming masterpiece. I also really like Hunt Sales from Tin Machine. The first Tin Machine album is another record where it actually sounds like people *playing*. I don't know why that's such a rarity in rock 'n' roll these days. Hunt also played on Iggy




## Walk The Walk

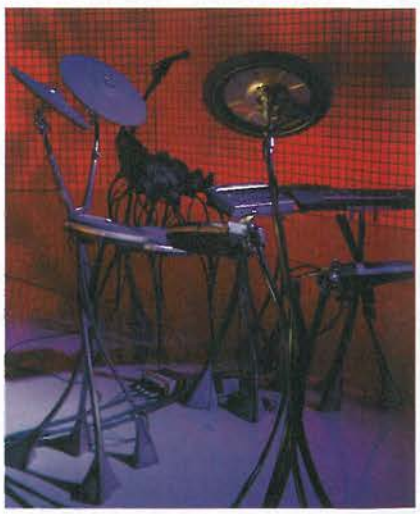
### Matt On His Unique Electronic Standup Kit

**MD:** Let's discuss your kit, which is essentially a one-of-a-kind work of art designed by sculptress Dessa Kirk. How did that come about?

**Matt:** Just like the record, this is really taking the concept all the way to one side. We felt it was important to present this music in a way that would somehow translate visually what we were doing sonically. Billy [Corgan] has a strong distaste for any kind of muso/tech-oriented gear—like big drum cages—but he knew Dessa and had the idea of building my kit and the keyboard stands from her designs. She took our sketches and built my stand, the keyboard and mic' stands, and pretty much everything except for the light wall. Every night that I walk up to that drumset I get excited, because it's so new and cool. I had a few specs going in, as far as how high up I wanted the pads—which are made by Yamaha—but I'm not using that many pads. To be honest, I had never stood up to play before, so I wasn't sure what would work best. I had to just go out on the road and hope it would work out, which it has.

**MD:** How are the pads tuned or programmed?

**Matt:** They're different on every song. One pad might be a kick on one song



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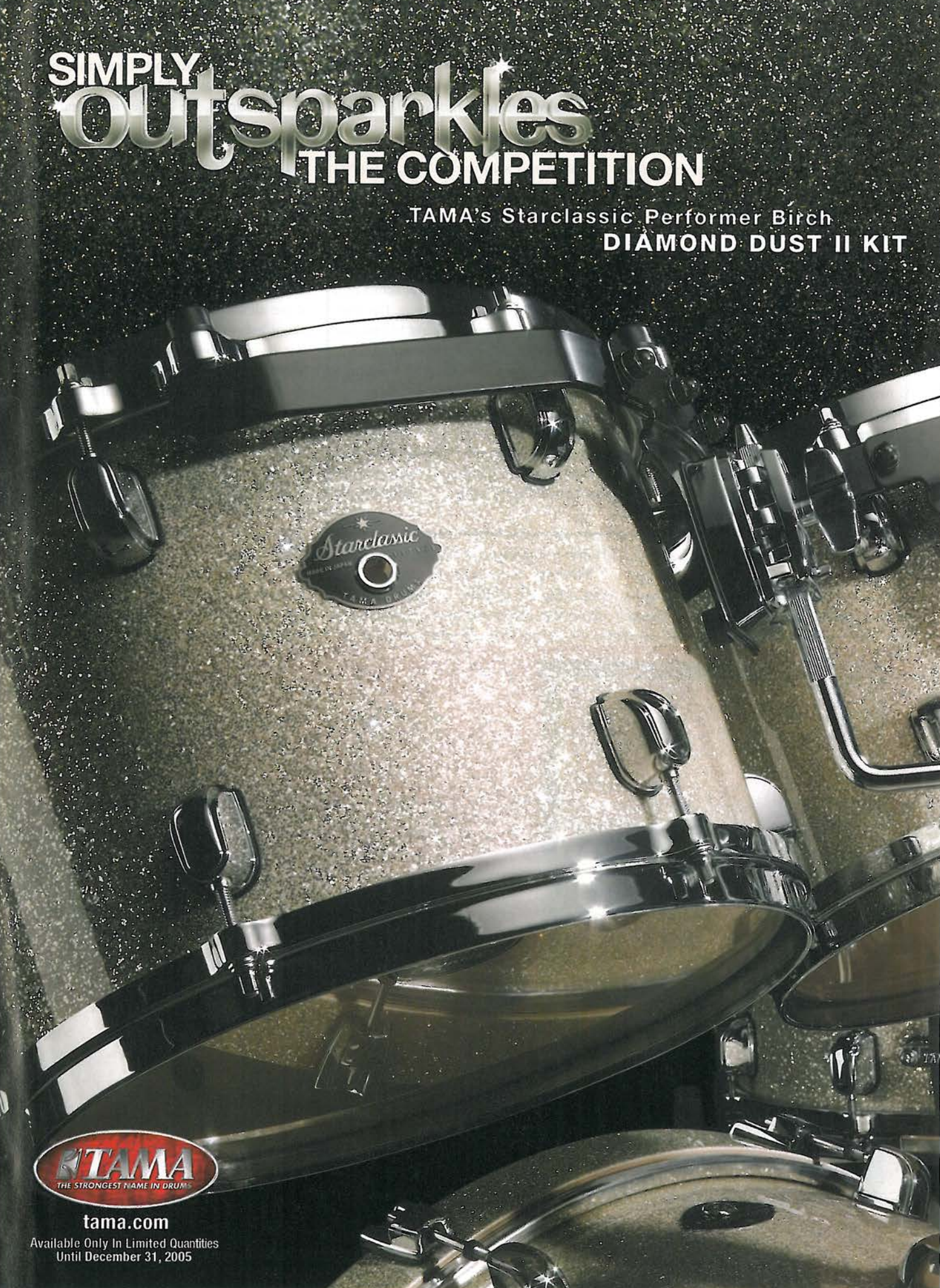
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continued from page 128

and on the next it's a treated hi-hat. Each sound is a kit that I program, so I change to a new kit on my brain. I really have to hand it to Yamaha, because their electronic drum brain takes a memory card, which holds all my samples, and I just load that in. I think that's a fairly recent capability for electronic drumkits. The cymbals are just pads shaped like cymbals. In Yamaha's design they would be *programmed* to be cymbals, but for me they're about 20% cymbals and 80% other noises. Sometimes I have bass drums up there. Any pad can be any sound.

**MD:** Are you using special sticks?

**Matt:** No. I'm still using Zildjian sticks. Zildjian had a laugh when I said I was doing a tour, but I didn't need any cymbals. [laughs]

**MD:** What are the physical challenges of playing while standing night after night?

**Matt:** Playing standing up has definitely made me a better dancer. [laughs] It's kind of hard not to rock out standing up. I honestly feel like, when I'm sitting down, my legs and my back are moving just as much, but you don't see it. This is so much more visual.

Aside from all kinds of new aches and pains in my back and my legs, I'm really enjoying it, because I get to feel the show from a different perspective. After so many years of sitting in the same place, looking out and seeing bass guy on your left, guitar guy on your right, and singer straight on, it's just nice to look at the stage from a different place. And it's nice to be able to really see the audience. That's *huge*. **Gail Worley**

Pop's album *Lust For Life*. I've always listened to—but now have a deeper appreciation for—Dennis Davis. What Dennis brought to the table on those classic David Bowie recordings was extremely unique.

From my more jazz-oriented days, I'm still a big fan of Peter Erskine. His whole career has blown me away, especially his time in Weather Report. One other *huge* influence is Bob Marley's drummer, Carlton Barrett. He boggles my mind! It's really easy to play a fake reggae beat. But to do the real thing is nearly impossible.

**MD:** Chicago is known for having spawned a particular "sound," embodied by bands like NIN, Filter, and Ministry. What aspects of your drumming style are informed by that faction of the Chicago scene?

**Matt:** I came into the Chicago industrial scene almost by accident. I knew very little about industrial music when I got that gig, but I got schooled pretty fast! [laughs] What I was able to bring to industrial music was my really good time. I had no problem playing to a click, especially live, and for a drummer playing industrial music, that's the most important thing.

At that time, I also started to really fall in love with technology: computers and drum machines. I still remember when drum machines came out and people said, 'This is the end of drummers' careers!' I thought, 'What are you talking about? This is *great*.' [laughs] I wrote parts on them and used them to my advantage. I also told

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my students, 'Get a drum machine and start programming beats. Try to program a beat that you've played, and it will teach you what you're doing. Play to your drum machine and make it your friend.' Of course, today drum machines sound so antiquated because everything is all computer-oriented.

**MD:** With the heavy reliance on programming for the recording of *The Future Embrace*, how does the music translate live?

**Matt:** The hardest thing about getting the live show together was programming the sounds to work with the drums that were already done for the record. I had to find a way to work with it that was unobtrusive, but still added energy to the show. Otherwise, what's the purpose of me being there? I'm not replaying the drum machine parts; those are actually coming off a computer and I'm integrating *with* them. There's a Yamaha brain with all my sounds, which are samples I've created and customized to each song. Sometimes I'm layered in unison with the beats, where maybe I'm layering over the snare with a white-noise snare that adds a little bit of movement, and playing a sub-kick that goes underneath. Then I'm hitting every third beat, things like that. That way I can vary it nightly so it doesn't become static.

On other songs my playing is more percussion-oriented, like very small, processed hi-hats and electronic noises. Another part of the show includes several numbers

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where there are no backing tracks—which gets into my improvisational background. We're doing an old blues number or two where it's just a free-for-all every night. I play the kick drum with my right hand—because there's no use of my feet on this kit—and the snare with my left. Sometimes I manage to get some kind of ride-oriented sound out of another pad and find a way to play that too.

**MD:** Do you find yourself coming up against a lack of dynamics because of all the electronics involved?

**Matt:** For a long time now, rock 'n' roll has been reduced to some pretty remedial dynamics, as far as "loud, soft, loud, soft." Dynamics in the context of what we're doing are based more on the arrangement of the parts, such as the key place to stop playing the snare or the bass drum, and also by the sounds I choose. The dynamics are definitely subtler, but I don't think that makes them less powerful. They're just not so obvious. In this music, the drums are simply not as responsible for the dynamics as they would be in a normal rock situation. I find it rather interesting and inspiring to approach it in such a new way.

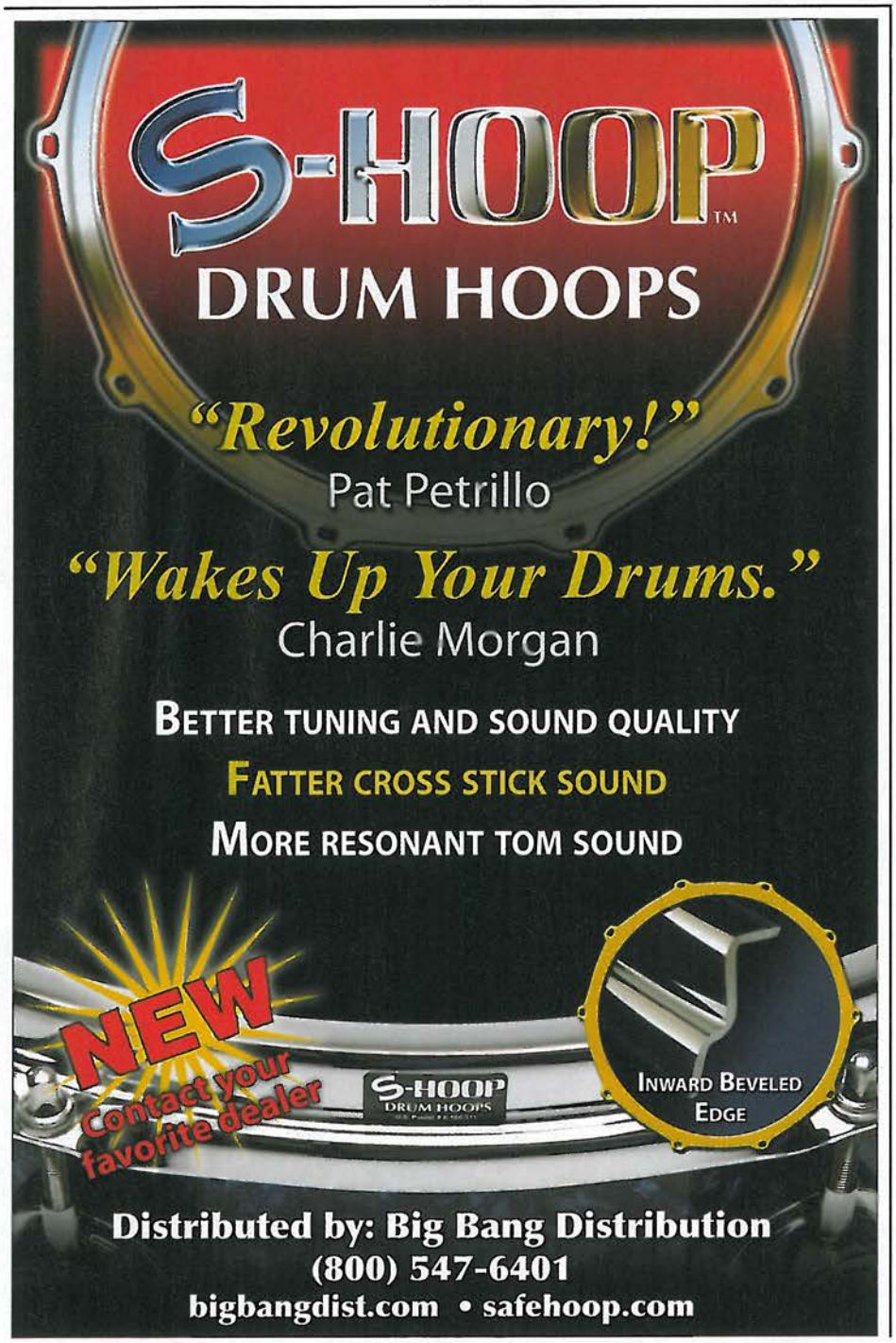
**MD:** How has this gig made you a better drummer?

**Matt:** Since I'm not using my feet, I've decided to use this as an opportunity to get back to my rudiments. Although the parts I'm playing are really simple, on stage, for the most part, I'm working on just being machine-like in my accuracy, in my time, and even in my technique.

**MD:** You're known as being a very precise drummer. Can you give our readers some tips on how to develop accuracy?

**Matt:** Practice constantly. When I was eighteen I got serious about playing to a click and being steady with my time. Many drummers, when they're starting out, hear this click thing and get nervous. But I almost prefer it because I know it's something I can count on. At the same time, you have to get to a point where you can play

**"In this music, the drums are simply not as responsible for the dynamics as they would be in a normal rock situation. I find it inspiring to approach it in such a new way."**



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## Matt Walker

*around* the click. There are a lot of subtle things you can do to incorporate feel into a performance when you're playing to a click. You can rush the downbeat at the end of a fill and then come back to the click on beat 2 with the snare. It's like a little dance.

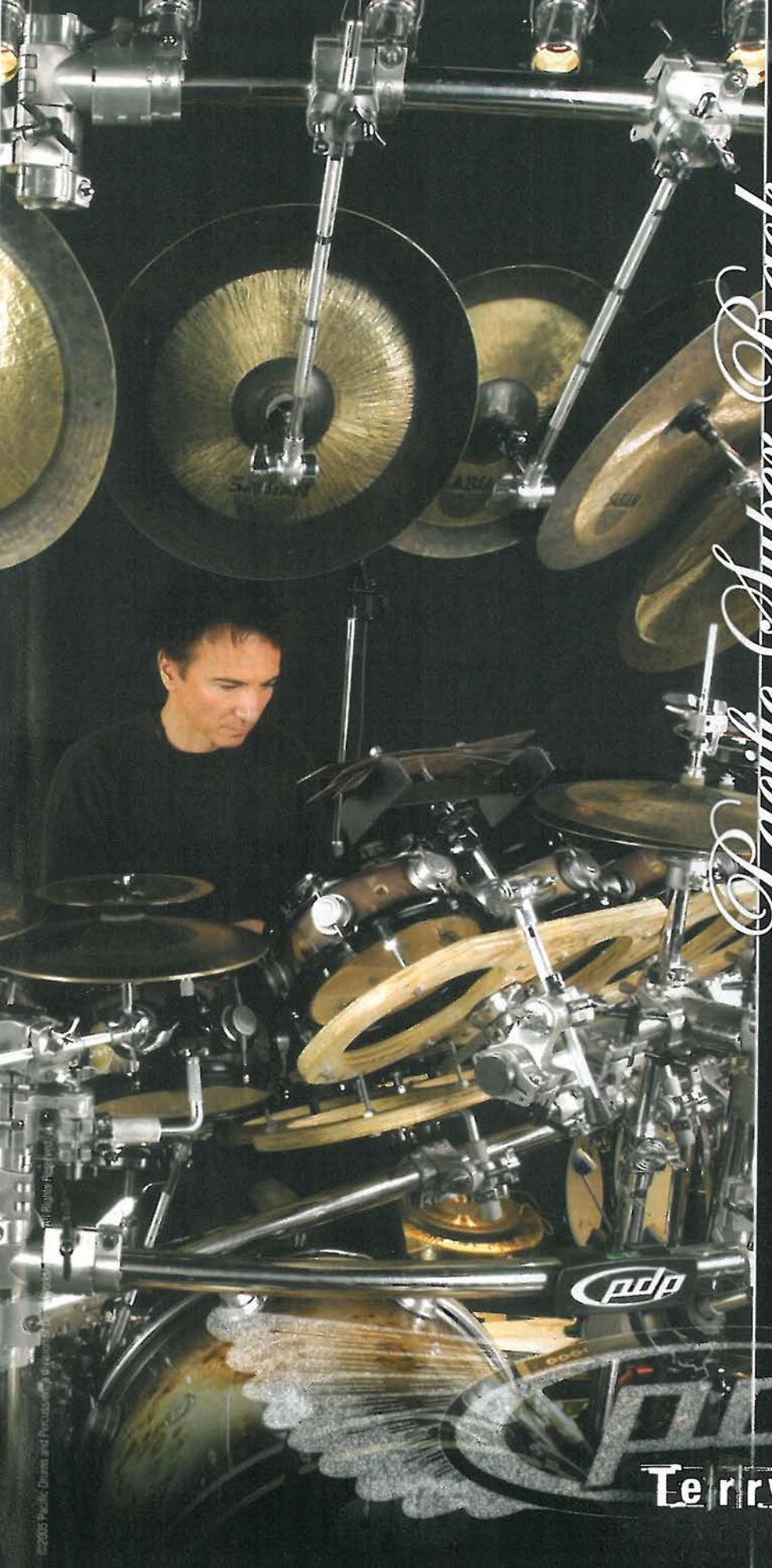
When I practiced as a kid, I would put on headphones and turn on the radio. Then I'd just flip the dial randomly, and whatever was playing—jazz, rap, reggae, or whatever—I'd play along to it. Then I'd flip to another station and play along to something else. I think that helped me with sessions because now I can pretty much play any style. Looking at music from different perspectives by playing other instruments also helps with your time as a drummer, and it has an affect on your groove.

**MD:** For years you've had an ongoing project with Jim Dinou called Impossible Recording Machine. What's that about?

**Matt:** It's a very unusual relationship, because my involvement as a drummer is the last thing on the list. Mostly I work as a collaborator, songwriter, and producer. Jim and I share this musical dialog that I doubt anyone else in the world understands, but for some reason we found each other. It's almost like a marriage. [laughs] We've recorded two albums, but there's no real agenda; it's just become how we channel this music inside of us. We've been on hiatus this last year, but we plan to continue working together as long as we can.

I've been writing my own music for a couple of years now, and I'm finally taking the steps to create a band, Army Of Light, around that material. I'm really excited, and as soon as I'm done with this tour I'm going to take some time, start tracking on my own, and bring in all the musicians who I respect and have worked with over the years. No matter what I'm doing, I'm always trying to make something unique and special.

*For more on Matt Walker, go to www.Mattwalker.info.*



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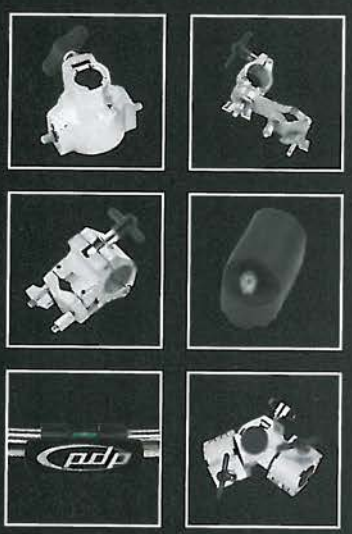

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Terry Bozzio

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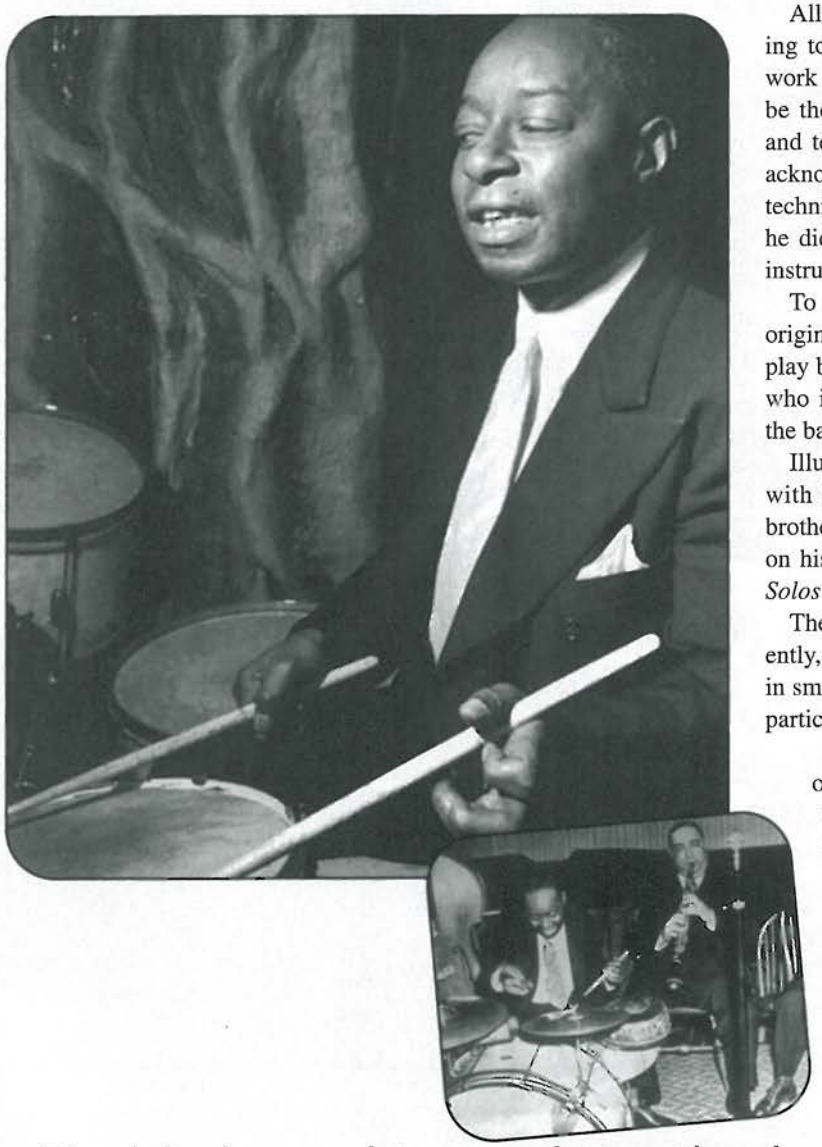
# Baby Dodds

## The First Great Jazz Drummer

*by Burt Korall*

**"Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all." Those who best deal with life and music seldom ignore this excellent piece of advice. Drum pioneer Warren "Baby" Dodds (1898–1959) was no exception. He felt very strongly about excellence. To perform as inventively as possible was his underlying purpose.**



All who saw this legendary figure play or spent time listening to his key recordings realize how much Dodds loved his work and how much he brought to it. Considered by many to be the first important jazz drummer, Dodds developed ideas and techniques that became part of the literature. He was an acknowledged developmental artist when the drumset and jazz techniques for percussion instruments were taking form. What he did—how he reacted to music—had a major effect on the instrument's direction.

To get an idea of some of the important concepts Dodds originated, consider this: He was one of the first drummers to play breaks and fills between phrases. And he was one of those who initially converted the military press-roll time pattern to the basic jazz cymbal beat.

Illuminating Dodds performances can be found on records with Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet, Bunk Johnson, his brother Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong, and Earl Hines, and on his own releases, such as *Baby Dodds: Talking And Drum Solos* .

The legendary Gene Krupa frequently spoke of Dodds reverently, indicating he was the key early influence on drummers in small bands. Only Chick Webb had a stronger overall affect, particularly in the big bands from the 1930s onward.

Dodds had to devise ways and means for himself and other players. All through his career he broke ground, established patterns, and set the course for the instrument. Players of his stature and level of invention were indeed rare as jazz was beginning to make its way. Dodds, who was from New Orleans, had a strong affect on Zutty Singleton and other leading traditional players such as Krupa, Ben Pollack, Dave Tough, George Wettling, and Ray Bauduc.

What Dodds had to offer was fresh and new. Much of it was previously untried—or unimagined. The drummer showed colleagues how to play and apply rudi-

Dodds brought *music* to the instrument, giving shape, form, and a sense of substance to the fold.

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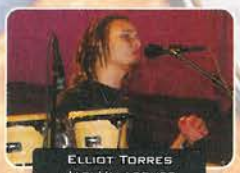
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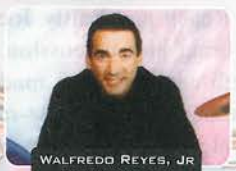
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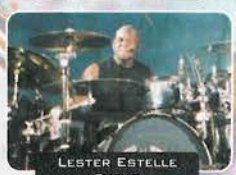
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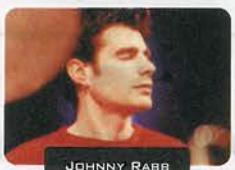
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ments in a jazz manner, how to swing and creatively utilize syncopation, where to play and how to phrase ideas, and when and how to play on the drumset, cymbals, and other accessories. In essence, Dodds brought *music* to the instrument, giving shape, form, and a sense of substance to the fold.

Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones, who helped bring jazz percussion into the late twentieth century, both made a point of emphasizing Dodds' wide-ranging influence, which certainly extended beyond his own style. Writer Nat Hentoff noted that Roach, in particular, "was struck with the range and constant shifting of tonal color Baby Dodds displayed as he moved all over his set. He continued to vary the sound of his beat according to the soloist within a single piece."

As for Philly Joe's assessment of Dodds' drumming, here's what he said in an early *Modern Drummer* interview: "Dodds was swingin' so much [one night], I was late an entire set for my gig. I sat down and just stayed."

Dodds was not a "banger." He went about his business thoughtfully and with sensitivity. Though far from a great technician, he made his point in an interesting manner. He played and supported the divisions of a song. And while improvising, he instinctively played what was appropriate.

As for Dodds' time feel, it was superb. He made music dance, paralleling its motion and inner feeling. He played supportively, for the benefit of others, and always paid close attention to what was happening around him. He had a sense of what was right and fitting.

**Gigs**

Louis Armstrong

Jelly Roll Morton

Joe "King" Oliver

Sidney Bechet

Earl Hines

Unlike many contemporary drummers and older showmen like Duke Ellington's Sonny Greer, when Dodds played he used fewer cymbals, drums, and accessories than most practitioners, and seldom played things purely for effect. If a technique worked as part of the music, he adopted it. If not, he didn't hesitate to scrap the idea.

The ability to make the right adjustments to the changes of musical circumstances within the music was important to Dodds. To achieve color, shade, and multi-level nuances in his work, he creatively brought into play most elements of his kit—snare, three tom-toms, bass drum, two cymbals, woodblock, cowbells, rims, and shells. And Dodds was the first to extract the full potential of the bass drum, furnishing a rhythmic undercurrent that flowed evenly. He also displayed a subtle sense of pitch variation and was very careful in how he tuned his drums.

Though Baby Dodds adhered to a military mode of drumming throughout his career, his sense of pitch, dynamics, and overall sense of invention consistently enhanced his performances. They also helped him make the transition from early strict jazz structures to the freer, more flowing styles that followed. Much can be learned from listening to his incredibly tasteful, swinging performances.

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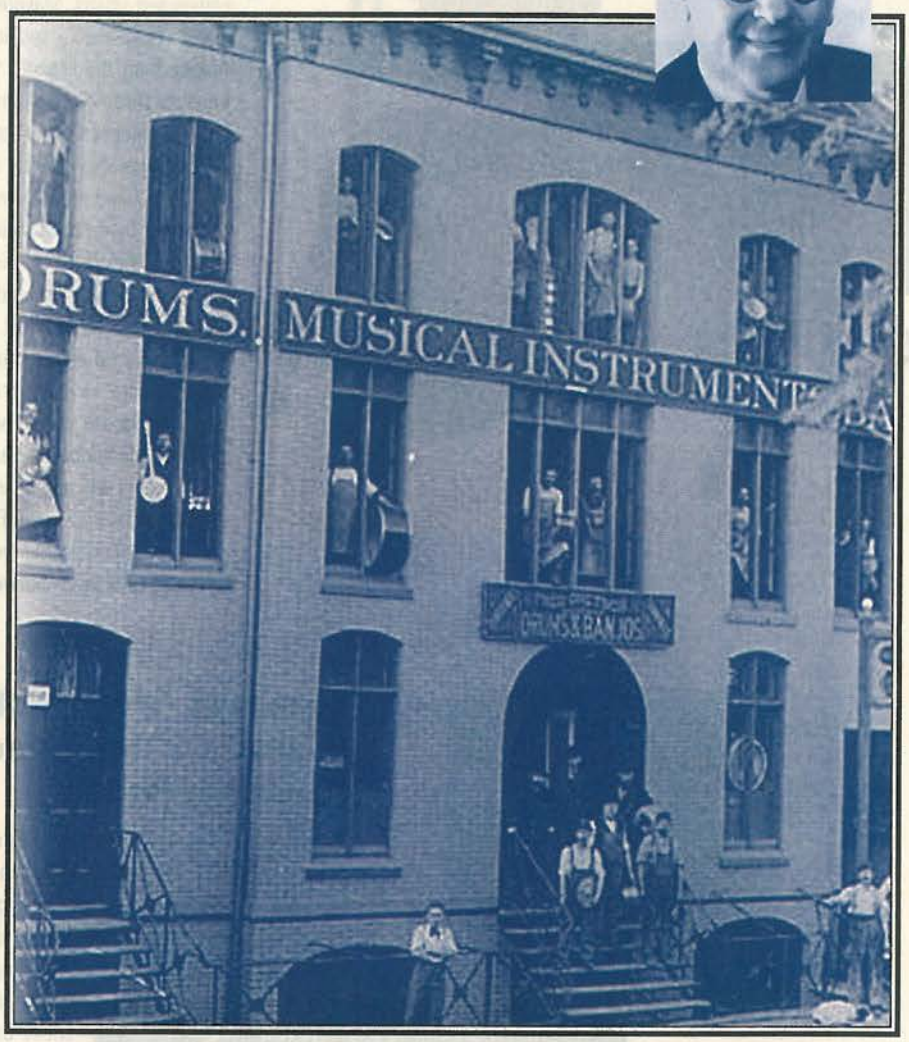
# THAT Great Gretsch Dream

*It began as a dream. A dream to craft instruments that sound better, look great, and satisfy the needs of musicians. After more than 122 years the dream lives on in all Gretsch products crafted today. Join the Gretsch family as we celebrate our family legacy and honor our forefathers with a Founders Celebration.*

**Fred Gretsch, Sr. (1880-1952)** Taking over the company in 1895 at the age of 15, Fred Gretsch, Sr. built the Gretsch Company into the world's largest musical instrument factory by 1920. His hard work and passionate desire to succeed drove the company forward at lightening speed. When he was not working long hours at his desk, Fred Sr. was busy tanning hides on the roof of the building to be used for drum and banjo heads, or expanding the Gretsch distribution network that would eventually be one of the largest in the music industry.




An inventor and considered "a drummer's friend", Fred Sr. developed the world's first warp-free drum shell in 1927. His belief in his product was evident in the guarantee he made for his drums to hold their shape. His dreams paved the way for him to develop the unique identity of Gretsch drums along with the addition of cast "Broadkaster" lugs and Gretsch-Gladstone tuners. A business genius, he recognized the importance of importing and he was the first to register the K. Zildjian and A. Zildjian trademarks in America in 1926. Top jazz drummers clamored for Gretsch drum kits. "That Great Gretsch Sound" served as the heartbeat of many great music venues from the Savoy Ballroom to Radio City Music Hall to NBC Radio and beyond.

Not only was he involved in the growth and development of the Gretsch business, Fred Sr., was committed to the advancement of the music industry during its early years. He served as treasurer and committee member for the National Music Merchandisers Association from 1926-1932. During that time he began grooming his sons Fred Jr., Bill, and Richard for company leadership. Retiring in later years to become the president and chairman of the board of The Lincoln Saving Bank in Brooklyn, New York, he left knowing that his sons shared his dreams for providing top quality products in the ever changing tide of the music industry.

Fred Gretsch, Sr. was a visionary, an industry pioneer and dedicated to the craft of producing Gretsch drums and Gretsch instruments to meet the demands of musicians. His dreams and his philosophy are still alive today in that Great Gretsch Sound. *The beat goes on!*

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| 1880 | 1895 | 1918 | 1920 | 1926 | 1927 | 1931 | 1935 | 1937 | 1939 | 1940 | 1952 | 2005 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fred Gretsch, Sr. was born | Becomes president of the company | Invents the "warp free" multi-ply drum hoop | Earns title as "Worlds Largest Musical Instrument Manufacturer" | Begins as treasurer and member for National Music Merchandisers Assoc. Register K Zildjian trademark in US Trademark and Patent Office | Registers A Zildjian trademark in US Trademark and Patent Office | Introduces Broadkaster Banjos | Unveils the Broadkaster Drum Kit | Partners with Billy Gladstone to develop the 3-way tension principle | Introduces the Electromatic electric guitar line | Becomes president of Lincoln Savings Bank | Fred Gretsch, Sr. passes away at age 72 | On the 125th anniversary of his birth, Fred Gretsch, Sr. is survived by 1 son, 13 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and 23 great-great-grandchildren. |

# Sharp-Dressed Drums

## Ludwig Quilted Makorè Drumkits And Engraved Black Beauty Snares

Ludwig now offers quilted makorè veneer on Ludwig Classic Maple series drums, including all outfit configurations, wood snares, and component drums. Makorè is a type of African black cherry. The quilting is created by a special way of cutting the timber from the Makorè tree. It results in an unusual three-dimensional effect that's even more pronounced under stage lights.

Ludwig is also offering a collector's edition of 150 2005 Black Beauty snare drums with hand engraving by drum historian and engraver John Aldridge. The 5x14 drums feature seamless brass shells, brass die-cast hoops, brass tube lugs, and brass-plated Millennium snare strainers and butt plates. The drums are fitted with Puresound snare wires and medium coated Weather Master batter heads.

Collectors will appreciate the vintage oval "Ludwig" badge and traditional woodshell case. Each drum carries a serial number plate and each is sequentially numbered for added value. List price is $1,595.

**(574) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com.**

# Good Vibrations Indeed!

## Evans EC2 Tom Heads And EMAD Resonant Heads

Evans EC2 Edge Control tom heads were developed in partnership with drummer/inventor Bob Gatzen. Each head features an Edge Control ring mounted under two plies of 7-mil film. The ring is designed to control edge vibration instead of eliminating it, in order to isolate and dampen higher overtones, enhance low-end and attack, and enable a broader tuning range. Stress-relief slots let the ring flex with the vibration of the head. As a result the EC2 will not choke at higher tuning ranges, or lose its full-bodied presence when tuned low. Heads are offered in sizes from 8" to 16", at prices ranging from $26 to $32.

Evans has also introduced EMAD (Externally Mounted Adjustable Damping) Resonant heads for bass drums, in 18" to 24" sizes. The EMAD Resonant is a 7-mil head with a fixed internal ring. Two interchangeable foam rings dampen overtones around the edge of a 5" port, focusing the pitch and enhancing attack. The firmer of the two rings delivers enhanced attack, controlled sustain, and focused low-end. The softer ring provides a rounder tone and moderately controlled sustain, and is said to be especially useful for smaller drums and high tuning. Prices range from $67 to $80.

**(800) 323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.**

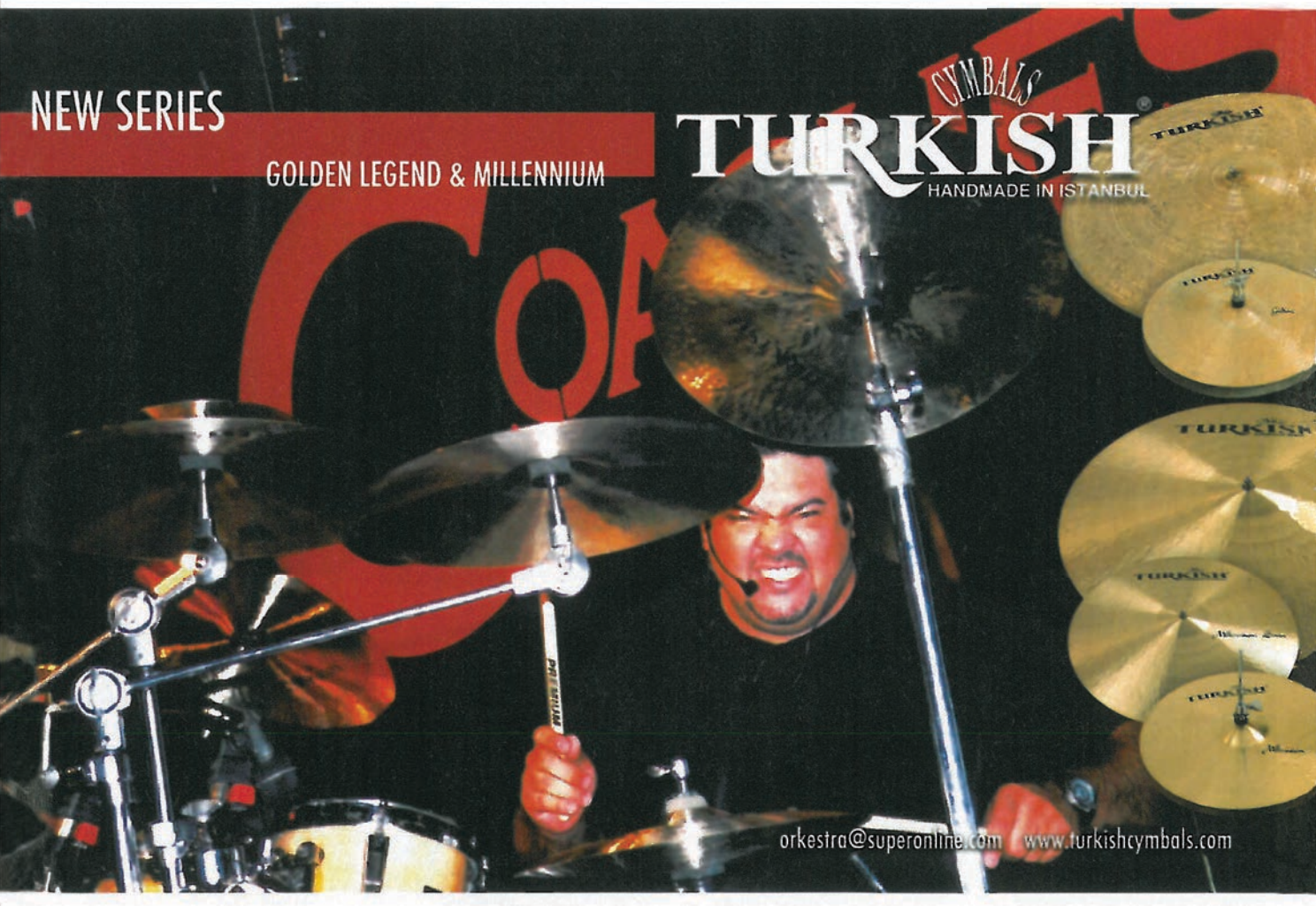
# How'm I Doin', Coach?

## Roland RMP-5 Rhythm Trainer

Roland's RMP-5 Rhythm Trainer is an electronic practice unit that features a one-piece molded body with integrated pad and brain, as well as a tunable mesh drumhead. It contains over forty onboard PCM sounds, including snare drums, cymbals, and percussion instruments.

The RMP-5's onboard Rhythm Coach challenges drummers with functions such as Time Check, Auto Up/Down, and Stroke Balance to help develop consistent stick technique. The Rhythm Coach can even grade the performance, so drummers can chart their progress. In addition, a dual trigger input can be used to connect Roland's KD-8 kick and CY-8 cymbal pads (sold separately). The RMP-5 provides the sounds for each pad, so the user can play complete grooves alone, along with the Rhythm Coach, or with an audio source (such as a CD player) connected to the RMP-5's External Audio input. List price is $279.

**(800) 386-7575, www.rolandus.com.**

# Spanning A Continent

## Toca Mandjani, Vuur, And Vryheid Djembes

Toca's newest djembes are the result of extensive research into the folklore and indigenous sounds of various regions of Africa. Each drum is hand made in the traditional fashion, then treated to an extensive sealant process.

African Mandjani djembes are designed to deliver the authentic timbres associated with the West African mandjani rhythm. The drums feature mahogany shells that are hand lathed to a distinctive shape, then kiln dried and given up to twenty coats of teak oil for a rich finish and protection against bumping and scraping. Hand-carved designs and natural goatskin heads maintain ancient traditions, while modern low-stretch Alpine rope is used for tensioning. Drums come in 7", 8", 10", 12", and 13" sizes, and range from $95 to $325 in price.

Synergy Vryheid and Vuur djembes hark back to the freedom struggles of the South African Zulus. Vryheid djembes are finished in a natural wood finish with a hand-painted tribal wave overlay. Vuur djembes are finished in a deep red penetrating stain. Both models receive up to twenty coats of teak oil. Goatskin heads are secured with Alpine rope. Available sizes are 7", 8", 10", and 12", with prices ranging from $65.50 to $269.50.

**(973) 478-6903, www.tocapercussion.com.**

**From left: Toca Synergy Vuur, Synergy Vryheid, and African Mandjani djembes**

# In The Ear Of The Beholder

## Shure E4 Isolating Earphones

Shure's new sound isolating E4 earphones are equipped with high-definition drivers and tuned-port technology to create "an ultra-wide frequency soundstage with brilliant highs and extended bass." They're said to be ideally suited for use with Shure's PSM line of personal monitor systems in both live performance and studio recording applications.

The E4 earpieces are outfitted with high-energy/low-mass micro-transducers to provide wide-frequency stereo sound, sonic accuracy, and total isolation from outside noise. Sensitivity at 1 kHz is rated at 122 dB SPL/mW, while impedance is 110 ohms (also at 1K). The earpieces are designed to rest comfortably within the ear, providing a tight seal for sonic isolation and a secure fit. They can be used with foam, flex, or triple-flange accessory sleeves. Each E4 set comes with a gold-plated stereo output connector with an $^1/_8$" plug, an $^1/_8$"-to-$^1/_4$" adapter plug, and a 61" cable. List price is $319.99.

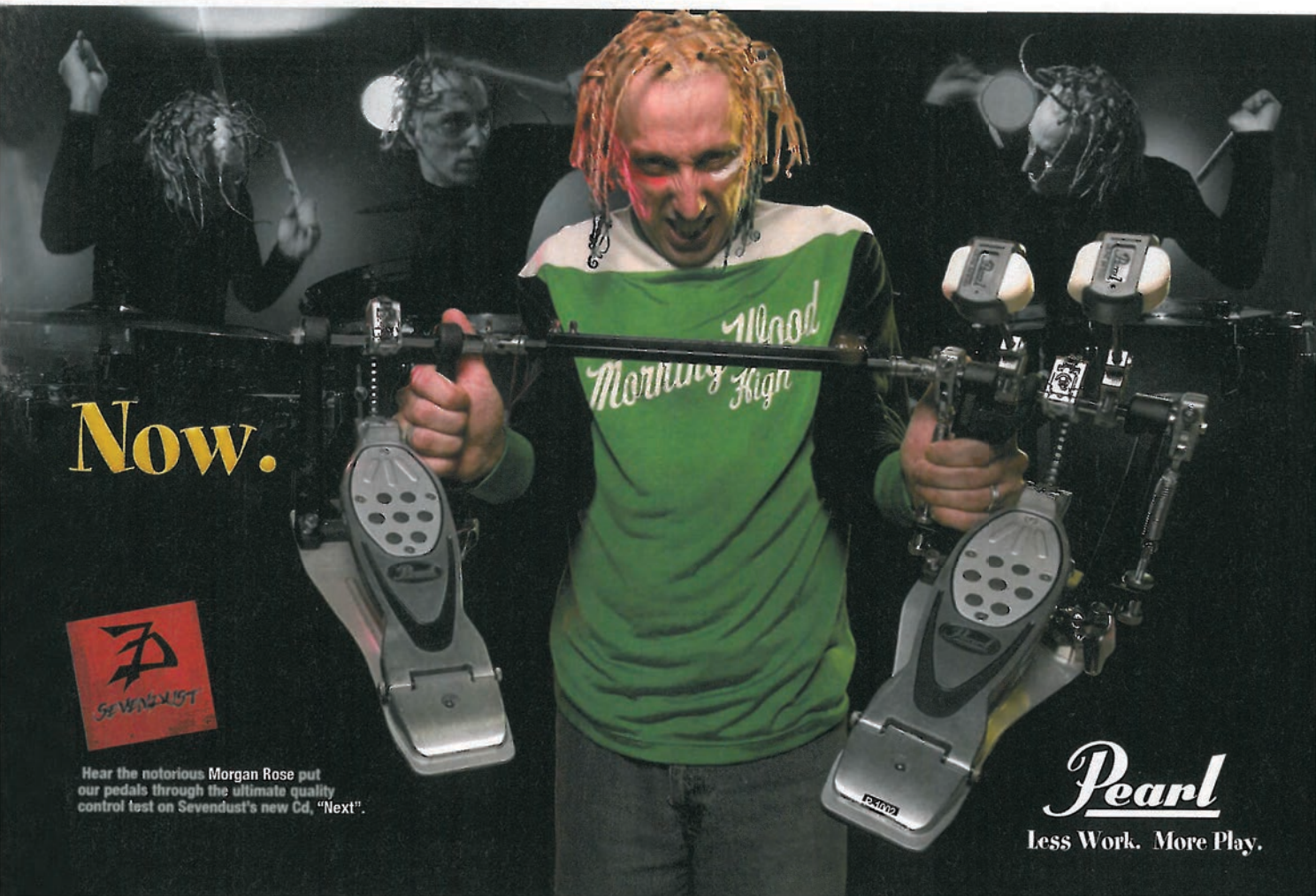
**(847) 600-2000, www.shure.com.**

# Can I Get This Wrapped?

## New GMS Covered Finishes

New Black Lightning, Blue Lightning, Black Ice, Blue Ice, Lime Green Ice, and Purple Marble wraps are now available exclusively from GMS. The unique wraps will be added to the wide selection of lacquer-finish options currently available on the manufacturer's Grand Master and Special Edition series drums.

**(631) 293-4235, www.gmsdrums.com.**

## Let There Be...
### TMD Customs Lighted Drums

Drummers tired of being left in the dark now have a chance to shine. TMD Customs literally wraps drums in light, using a flat, flexible technology called Ceelite. Once the material is applied, a special film is put over it to create the desired color and effect. Available films include solid colors, granite, satin flames (as shown), and abstract designs. The Ceelite panels can be programmed to respond to touch or to motion-sensitive actions, or at regular time intervals. They're said to have no more effect on the sound of a drum than traditional wrapped finishes do.

TMD Customs drums are made from 100% maple Keller shells. They're equipped with either Trick or Nickel Drumworks strainers, 2.3-mm hoops, Gauger RIMS mounts, offset lugs, and Remo drumheads.

**(609) 731-3494, www.tmdcustoms.com.**

## The Reference Shelf

### TrackPak
**(Hal Leonard)**

This software series is designed for use with Apple's GarageBand recording software. The first four titles are *Classic Rock* (The Beatles, Cream, Aerosmith, Van Halen, and more), *Modern Rock* (Nirvana, Maroon 5, Blink-182, and more), *R&B* (James Brown, Aretha Franklin, The Temptations, and more), and *Hip-Hop* (Eminem, 50 Cent, Ja Rule, and more). Each song includes loops for each instrument, plus the complete tracks. A booklet with notes, tabs, and lyrics is included. List price is $29.95.

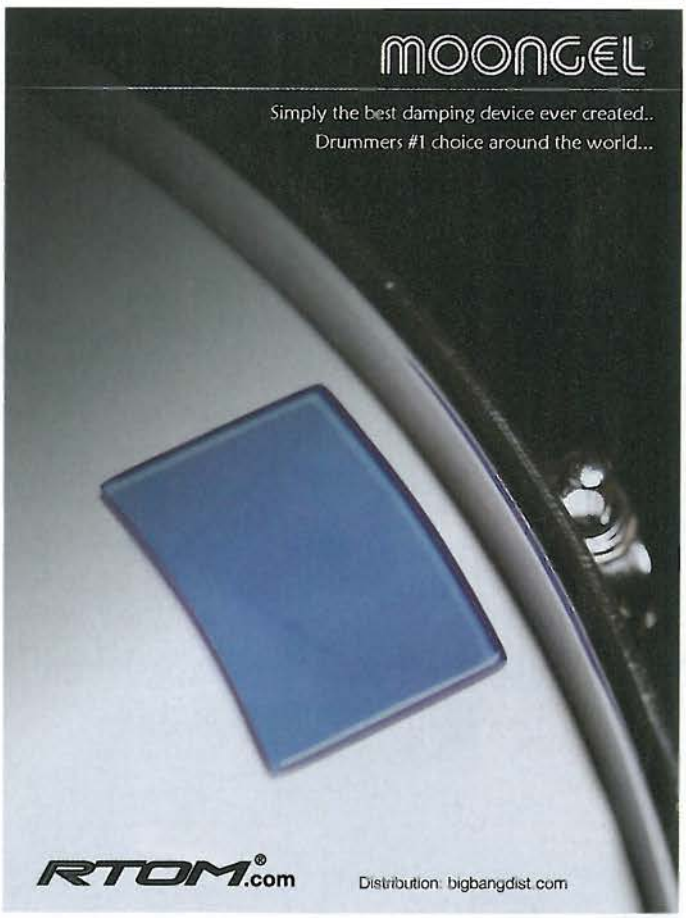
**(800) 637-2852, www.musicdispatch.com.**

### The Drummer's Guide To Loop-Based Music
by Tony Verderosa
**(Hal Leonard)**

This book/CD package is a complete guide to techno drum styles, including hip-hop, electronica, jungle, drum 'n' bass, trip-hop, 2-step, acid jazz, ambient, ill-bient, and other styles. Notated transcriptions of most of the audio examples are included.

An enhanced CD features additional audio tracks, a demo version of the ACID Xpress program by Sonic Foundry, and VFX video clips. Also in the package are interviews with leading techno drummers, as well as a comprehensive glossary of terms used in techno culture. List price is $19.95.

**(414) 774-3630, www.halleonard.com.**



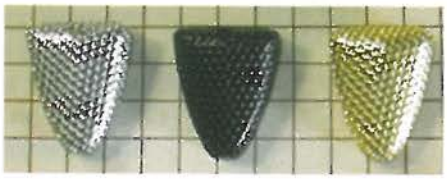
# And What's More

**BRADY DRUMS** has recently added Brushbox as a new veneer finish to their line of ply drums. The Eastern Australian timber features outstanding grain patterns, and is available in a satin or high-gloss finish. Meanwhile, Tasmanian Blackwood has been added to Brady's line of Exotic Block snare drums. This timber is said to create "extraordinarily mellow and warm characters reminiscent of the 'vintage' sound."
**(011) 618-94972212, www.bradydrums.com.au.**

**AZJAX** offers hand-crafted, kiln-dried djembes. The approximately 25x12$^{1}/_{2}$ drums are said to offer a range of sounds from a high-pitched crack to a deep bass tone. Drums are fitted with chemical- and dye-free goatskin heads, and high-quality, low-stretch Alpine climbing rope is used for the Mali weave tuning system. The list price of $199.99 includes a carrying bag.
**(916) 457-7910, www.azjaxdrums.com.**

**AUDIO-TECHNICA** has added two new drum packs to its line of affordable Midnight Blues mic's. The MB/Dk4 drum pack ($199) consists of three MB 5k cardioid dynamic snare/tom mic's, one MB 6k cardioid dynamic kick drum mic', and three AT8665 clip-on mic' mounts. The MB/Dk6 drum pack ($449) consists of two MB 4k cardioid condenser overhead/hi-hat mic's, three MB 5k mic's, one MB 6k mic', and three AT8665 mounts.
**(330) 686-2600, www.audio-technica.com.**

**WORLDMAX** Pounded bass drum claws are designed to add a bright flare to any kit. The distinctive claws are available in chrome, black, or brass finish.
**(615) 365-3965, worldmaxusa@aol.com.**

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## And What's More continued

**EVANS'** new Utility Key features an ergonomic handle, flat and Phillips-head screwdrivers, bottle openers, a small blade, a fitted carrying case, and a locking, fold-out high-torque drumkey (particularly useful in marching applications). The key's shaft (and the other tools) are crafted from strong stainless steel, while the handle is made of a high-grade die-cast aluminum. List price is $39.99.
**(800) 323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.**

**TRAPS** drums are a new line of shell-less, ultra-portable practice and performance drums from the UK. The A-400 kit boasts a double-headed bass drum for added depth, genuine Remo heads, a strong and silent snare throw-off, a traditional multi-screw tuning system, hexagonal non-slip mounting arms, rugged pedals, snare basket, and boom arms, and a sturdy tubular rack to hold everything firmly in place. The drums are currently available in the US via online purchase direct from the manufacturer.
**www.trapsdrums.com.**

**MEINL PERCUSSION** now offers Artist Series Luis Conte shakers, designed according to the master percussionist's requirements. The red Studio shaker is said to have a smooth, subtle tone. The black Live shaker has a louder, yet still delicate sound. The shakers are molded of durable plastic and list for $18.
**(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com.**

**PRO-MARK** is now handling sales of Grip Peddler products. Grip Peddler is an adhesive-backed, cushioned pad that attaches to bass drum or hi-hat pedals to improve feel, comfort, and pedal control. Four styles are available in a variety of shapes that fit virtually all bass drum and hi-hat pedals. List price is $19.95.
**(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.**

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# Summer NAMM

For the past several years the summer edition of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) show was held in Nashville. But what started out as a fairly small, low-key affair grew to the point where the Nashville convention center could no longer accommodate it. So this year's summer show was held in Indianapolis, whose convention center is much more spacious.

Ironically, a few of the major percussion manufacturers chose to skip the show, larger space or not. Quite a few who did attend chose not to unveil any new products, while others displayed items announced in recent *New And Notable* press releases. Still, a healthy amount of new gear was debuted at the show. Here are the highlights.

**1.** *Drum Techniques Of Led Zeppelin* is a new book offered by **Alfred Publishing.** (www.alfredpub.com)

**2.** This 4x10 auxiliary snare drum was introduced by **Cadeson**. (www.cadesonmusic.com)

**3.** A combination stick/mallet has been added to the line of Carbo Rods from **Carbostick.** (www.carbostick.de)

**4. EXO** is a new line of maple-shell drumsets said to deliver "mid-level quality at an entry-level price." (www.worldmusicsupply.com)

**5. Gator** introduced a heavy-duty hardware bag with a reinforced bottom that won't bend, as well as a new line of leatherette drum bags. (www.gatorcases.com)

**6. Gibraltar**'s Rack Factory now has a Rack Starter Pack. Components are available individually so that drummers can create their own custom racks. (www.kamanmusic.com)

**7.** Natural Curly Maple and Stardust finishes were introduced on **Gretsch** American Custom Series kits. (www.kamanmusic.com)

**8.** New impact pads and triggers are available to convert **Hansenfütz** practice pedals into electronic foot triggers. (www.hansenfutz.com)

**9.** ArtiSticks from **Hot Sticks** feature full-color graphics designed to withstand hard playing. (hotstix@bellsouth.net)

**10.** New **Istanbul Agop** models include a 20" flat Jazz ride, a 24" Jazz ride, a 24" Traditional Dark ride, and a 24" Alchemy Power ride. (www.istanbulcymbals.com, www.alchemycymbals.com)

**11.** New at the summer show were acrylic, aluminum, and 15-ply maple shells from **Keller Products**. (www.kellerproducts.com)

**12. Mad Padz** practice pads can be mounted on a stand, played on a flat surface, or strapped to one's leg. They also fit inside a standard stick bag. (www.madpadz.com)

# 2005

**13.** This 15th Anniversary **Mapex** Pro M kit is available in Fall Fade (pictured) and Jade Fade finishes. (www.mapexdrums.com)

**14. Meinl**'s Samba series of Brazilian percussion includes tamborims, pandeiros, samba bells, repeniques, and samba shakers, as well as assorted bags to fit all the new instruments. (www.meinlpercussion.com)

**15.** A limited-edition Gunmetal Silver finish was displayed on this **Pearl** Export EXR kit. (www.pearldrum.com)

**16. Pro-Tec**'s student snare bag has a compartment that holds a stand, sticks, and the like, as well as a telescoping handle and wheels. (www.protecmusic.com)

**17. Rhythm Electronic Technology**'s NS2 electronic kit features traditional heads and wood shells in order to look and feel more acoustic. (www.retpercussion.us)

**18. Sonor** displayed DeLite kits with new Green Fade, Ice Sparkle, and Brown Fade finishes. This kit is sitting on a Rolling Riser, a portable riser on wheels that is available in several sizes and heights. (www.honerusa.com)

**19. Stagg**'s Classic cymbal line includes flat rides and several crashes. (www.staggmusic.com)

**20.** Kenny Aronoff was on hand for the debut of his $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 **Tama** Trackmaster signature snare with nickel-plated brass shell and hand engraving. (www.tama.com)

**21.** New **Vic Firth** products include two models of Steve Smith Wands (with rods wrapped around a foam core for a softer sound); sticks, mallets, and gloves designed by Kalani for drum circle applications; and Vic Pad practice pads that feature a snare drum sound and two playing surfaces. (www.vicfirth.com)

**22. World Drumshop** is a new company that imports African and world percussion instruments and accessories. (www.irietones.com)

**23.** Han Chi and Radian XL cymbals from China are offered by **World Percussion**. (www.worldpercussion.biz)

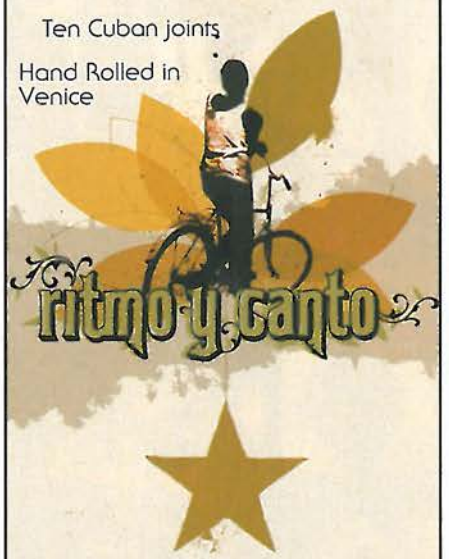
**24. Yak Pak** offers a Backpack Drum Case with a padded top and bottom, designed to fit doumbeks and small djembes. (www.yakpak.com)

**Text and photos by Rick Mattingly**

No trumpets
no bass
no organ

Ten Cuban joints

Hand Rolled in Venice



ritmo y canto

Adam Topol (Jack Johnson), Asdru Sierra, Justin "Niño" Porée and Raul Pacheco (Ozomatli,) David Leach (Innocent Criminals). Latin jazz producer and DJ Miles Perlich, batalero Luca Brandoli, Grupo Afrocuba de Matanzas vocalist Teresita Dome Perez. Juan Calvo Flores, Dixi Ipiña and Mike Ellison.

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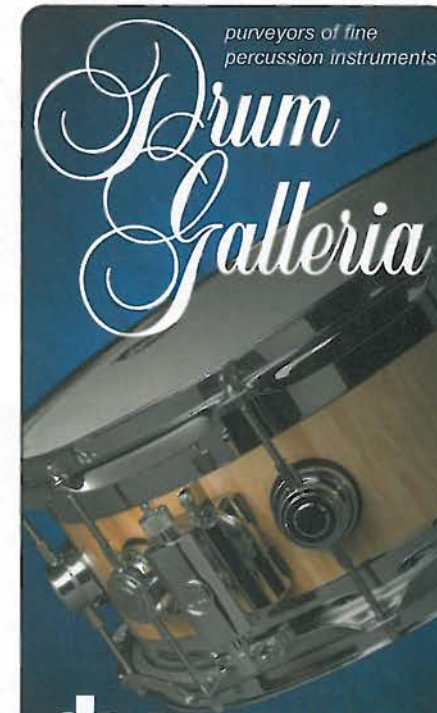
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# RECORDINGS

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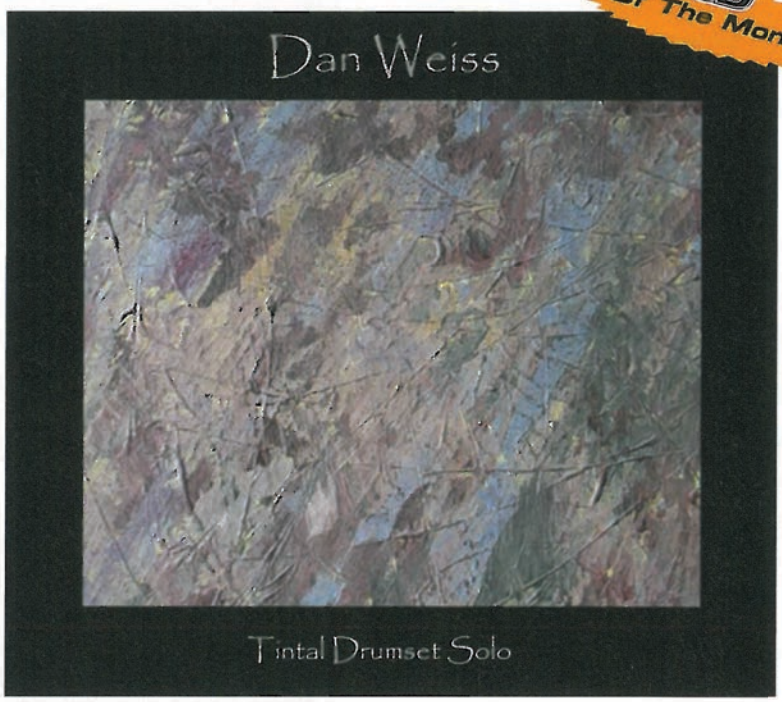
CD Of The Month!

## Dan Weiss
Tintal Drumset Solo (Chhandayan)




Here's a feat. Uniting two loves, **DAN WEISS** takes on a daunting challenge: executing an hour-long drumset rendition of transcribed tabla solos. Accompanied only by a repeated guitar melody, Weiss builds a fascinating sonic structure. It's an esoteric listen for sure. But Weiss transcends what could have been purely academic, injecting musicality and passion. It becomes especially clear how well he's pulling it all off when Weiss simultaneously verbalizes the tabla stroke syllables while playing. A very new take on the very old. (www.cdbaby.com)
**Jeff Potter**

## Arch Enemy Doomsday Machine (Century Media)

When a shapely blonde woman roars like a possessed polar bear, you take notice. But vocalist **Angela Gossow** isn't the only member of Sweden's Arch Enemy pushing the aural envelope. On their sixth album, **DANIEL ERLANDSSON** continues to bring extreme-metal drumming into the jaw-dropping zone. Throughout "Nemesis," Erlandsson's speedy kick and dynamic toms complement the molten guitars of brothers **Michael** and **Christopher Amott**. And while Erlandsson's stylish parts help establish the demented, off-kilter arrangements of "My Apocalypse," his crisp, straight-ahead beats on "Skeleton Dance" and "Hybrids Of Steel" reveal just enough flair and groove. **Jeff Perlah**

## Bill Frisell East/West (Nonesuch)

Bill Frisell makes plenty of excellent albums, but the stage is where he really mines his musical mischief. *East/West*, a double live album taped on both coasts, finds the guitarist playfully coaxing ungodly sounds from his axe before easing into sweet and tasty picking, while genres melt together in his one-world aesthetic. Frisell has a perfect foil in **KENNY WOLLESEN**, who plays on both discs (with different bassists). The drummer takes a delightfully unorthodox, wide-open approach—his feel is ever-shifting—and has a mastery of dynamics that equals Frisell's. On "Ron Carter," Wollesen's displaced backbeat nips at Frisell's heels like a pooch out with his best friend on a morning jog. **Michael Parillo**

## For The Ride Home
*some other stuff we're digging*

**Drums & Tuba**
*Battles Olé (Righteous Babe)*
Despite the pedestrian name, this full-blown modern-rock affair has balls. With drummer Tony Nozero.

**Morcheeba**
*The Antidote (Echo)*

**Pat Metheny**
*Trio 99>00 (2000, Warner Bros.)*

**Burning Spear**
*Our Music (Burning Music)*
Legendary reggae drummer Leroy "Horse Mouth" Wallace still showing how it's done.

**Deerhoof**
*The Runners Four (Kill Rockstars)*
One of the coolest bands on the block is back, featuring drummer Greg Saunier.

**Nightmare Of You**
*Nightmare Of You (EastWest)*

**The Occasion**
*Cannery Hours (Say Hey)*
Progressive with a small "p," cool with a very big "C." Charles Burst on drums.

## Significant Reissues by Ken Micallef

### Art Blakey

The 1957 Art Blakey recording *Drum Suite* is one of the great jazz percussion blowouts, featuring Art, **JO JONES**, and **SPECS WRIGHT** on drums, **CANDIDO CAMERO** and **SABU MARTINEZ** on bongos and congas, and everyone on percussion. Following a hardcore African theme, the first three tracks are tribal workouts accompanied by bassist **Oscar Pettiford** and pianist **Ray Bryant**. The remaining six tracks are split among two of Art's Jazz Messengers groups of the time. "The Sacrifice" opens the record with a full-on Afro-Cuban bash with solos from Jones and Art. The more lyrical "Cubano Chant" is piano-based, while the deceptive "Oscalypso" includes solos from Candido, Sabu, and Art in a slowly rising tide of percussive heat and drumming fireworks. As Kenny Washington says in the album's new liner notes, *Drum Suite* is absolute "gangbusters." (Sony Legacy)

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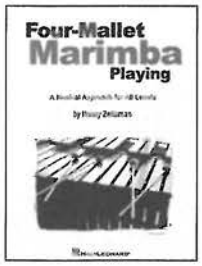


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# Critique

## Disturbed Ten Thousand Fists (Reprise)

All groove, all guts, all the time—that seems to be the prevailing philosophy behind **MIKE WENGREN**'s performance on the new Disturbed full-length. Wengren's synchronized kick hammering ("Guarded") and staccato tom work ("Decadence") have always been some of his strongest suits. *Ten Thousand Fists* just reconfirms his talent for locking it in with his stringed counterparts. The album's first single, "Stricken," finds Wengren infallibly nestled snugly into a potent groove throughout the course of the track. And 6/8 patterns, such as "I'm Alive," are tackled with equal ease—even on the bridge's throbbing tom phrases. Rarely does metal this aggressive feel this comfortable.

**Waleed Rashidi**

## Zen Blues Quartet (independent)

When the best elements of any particular style come together in a complete package, it doesn't necessarily have to possess ground-breaking qualities to warrant high merit. *ZBQ* offers everything a great blues recording requires: convincingly soulful vocals, gritty and inspired guitar, churchy B3 organ, and a fat pocket, courtesy of veteran groove master **STEVE FERRONE**. The superbly recorded tracks offer a full range of blues grooves, from gut-bucket slow tempo, to uptempo shuffle, and everything in between. Solid! (www.zenbluesmusic.com)

**Mike Haid**

## Various

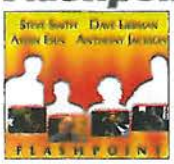
### Visions Of An Inner Mounting Apocalypse (Tone Center)

### Fusion For Miles (Tone Center)

Sight-reading very difficult Mahavishnu Orchestra and late '60s/early '70s Miles Davis charts, **VINNIE COLAIUTA** plays with his typically inspired-as-lightning pedigree on this all-guitar tribute. Vinnie upholds Billy Cobham's signature fills on "Birds Of Fire," "Celestial Terrestrial Commuters," and "Dance Of Maya" while infusing the grooves with his own uniquely slippery innovations. Overall, *Fusion For Miles* is about subtleties, befitting the music's spacey/spacious textures, with Vinnie morphing slow-burn smack downs and lithely intricate jazz/dub/funk rhythms.

**Ken Micallef**

## Flashpoint (Tone Center)



This engrossing recording features **STEVE SMITH**, **Anthony Jackson**, **Dave Liebman**, and **Aydin Esen**. In places recalling an early Weather Report record, and elsewhere simply reveling in the electricity of four improvisers supremely connected, *Flashpoint* is a study in contrasts. As always, Smith lays down a muscular plethora of notes that grooves like mad, and Jackson is his usual steely self. But in combination with Liebman's liquid reeds and Essen's atmospheric synths and piano, the music is subtle, lush, adventurous, and occasionally fire-breathing. Smith swings mightily throughout, the elastic arrangements enabling him to play with greater freedom and sensitivity than on his more guitar-centric projects.

**Ken Micallef**

## The Ghost Of Crimson Past

Skysaw, Zs, Forever Einstein

**by Michael Bettine**

Prog/fusion is alive and well in these recent releases. The percussion/zither (!) duo Skysaw (along with a guest violinist) rips out a heavy mid-period King Crimson vibe on their self-titled release. Drummer **YURI ZBITNOFF** is equally at home spinning creative rhythms on his drumkit, or providing percussion backdrops, like swelling gongs. (Lithq)

*Karate Bump* by the sextet Zs finds dual drummers **BRAD WENTWORTH** and **ALEX HOSKINS** weaving a tribal rhythm behind the dual-guitar, dual-sax line up. While intricately arranged, the music retains a sense of spontaneity. (Planaria)

Shifting rhythms and tight interplay mark the guitar trio Forever Einstein. Drummer **JOHN ROULAT** is adept at switching meters on the aptly named *Racket Science*. Imagine Crimson with twangy surf guitar riffs. (Cuneiform)

## Taking The Reins

### New drummer-led releases

**Alexandre Cunha**, *Batepapo*, www.tratore.com.br
**Chris Cawthray**, *The Fruits Of Our Limitations*, www.chriscawthray.com
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**level: beginner, $19.99 each**

The opening full band performance footage on the *Rock Drums* DVD presents world-class musicians playing an over-simplified rock tune in a sterile, uninspiring production. Understandably, they look bored to death. Tom Brechtlein is one of the finest drummers around, but there is much enthusiasm lacking on this disc. Further, Brechtlein explains and performs several rock beats, fills, and important aspects of using the drumkit in a rock context, but in a way that would seem confusing for younger beginners.

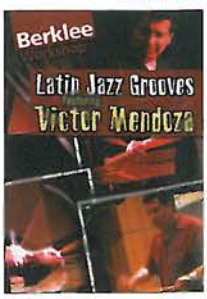
The *Blues Drums* disc, thankfully, is much more enthusiastic and focused. Brechtlein communicates clearly the essential fundamentals of the style, including shuffles, fills, and advanced blues-specific grooves and techniques. These reissues affordably combine steps one and two of the original VHS videos onto individual DVDs.

**Mike Haid**

## Latin Jazz Grooves

by Victor Mendoza (Berklee Press)

**level: beginner to intermediate, $19.95**




*Latin Jazz Grooves* focuses on establishing the clave and showing how instruments and music lock around it. After introducing the clave, Mendoza, a teacher at Berklee College of Music, shows cascara and fundamental cowbell patterns, along with a brief demonstration of a basic conga drum part. A nice feature is an explanation of tumbao and montuno, the bass and piano parts that traditionally would be played with the percussion, providing an overview of the whole Latin rhythm section. From here the DVD moves on to practice loops of clave, as well as many loops with a full rhythm section featuring different harmonic progressions, providing an excellent practice feature for any musician. Concert footage of Mendoza with his group shows the material discussed in context. While there are moments in the DVD where Mendoza seems nervous in front of the camera, the content is essential for any musician seeking a grounding in Latin groove. (www.berkleepress.com)

**Martin Patmos**

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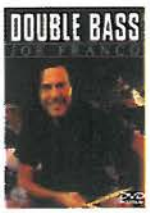
## Double Bass Drumming ♦♦♦½

by Joe Franco (Warner Bros.)

**level: all, $29.95**




Back in 1984, this was the first comprehensive instructional video of its kind for double bass drumming, based on Franco's best-selling book. The production on this reissue is obviously dated, but the educational content still stands firm as an excellent foundation for beginning double bass instruction. Franco covers all the basics, including groove patterns, fills, hand/foot combinations, and independence exercises. Most notable are the onscreen notations that accompany many of the exercises, allowing the viewer to pause the DVD and work on the pattern by reading the onscreen notation, then resume play to hear the pattern. Bonus footage includes several poorly recorded live concert solos. **Mike Haid**

## Rumba Vol. 2
### AfroCuban Conga Drum Improvisation: Mastering Clave With Quinto Licks

by Cliff Brooks (Mel Bay)

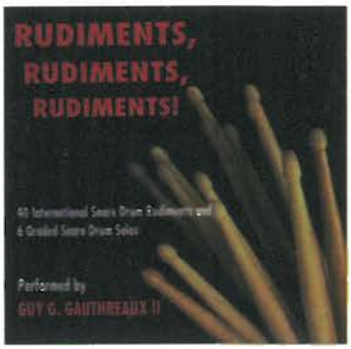
**level: beginner to intermediate, $29.95** ♦½

Focusing on the rumba clave, this book is designed to teach what can be done to vary conga patterns and keep things interesting when playing time in rumba-based music. This is done through showing quinto "ride" patterns that mark time, more complex phrases that take things up a notch, and solo passages. The lessons accumulate knowledge methodically but are often slow to get to the point. More troublesome, however, is that the book is written with the author's own notation system, which is difficult to read, confusing—and in fact unnecessary, since Western notation can easily be adapted to the open tones and slaps of congas (as has been done elsewhere). A conga book dedicated to what can be done with rumba clave is a good idea, as the bulk of Afro-Cuban drumming books focus more on son clave. Perhaps some other book will address this and spend more time explaining rumba music than notation. **Martin Patmos**

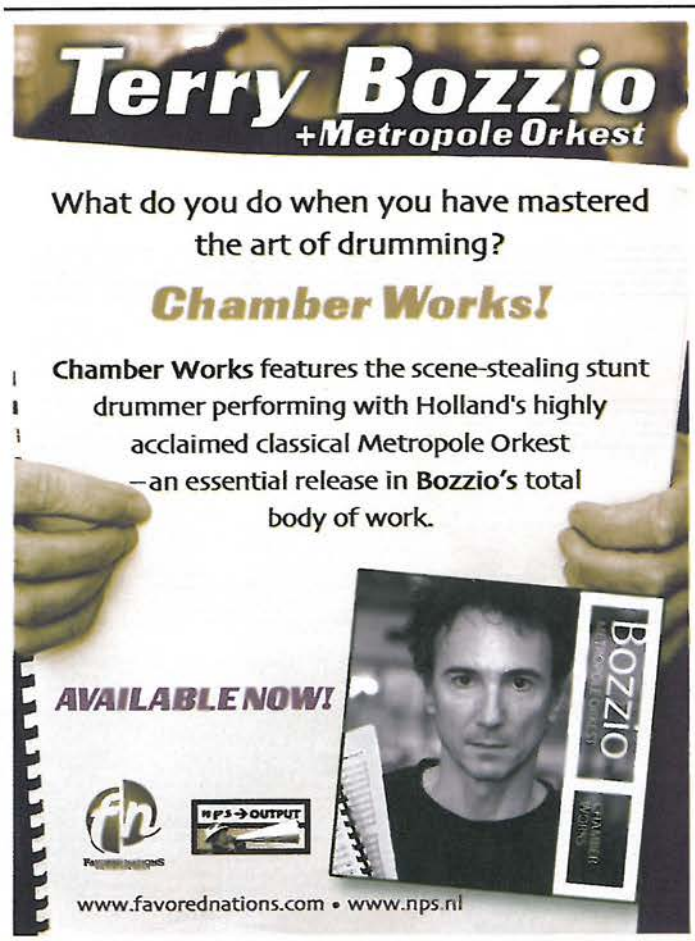
## Rudiments, Rudiments, Rudiments!

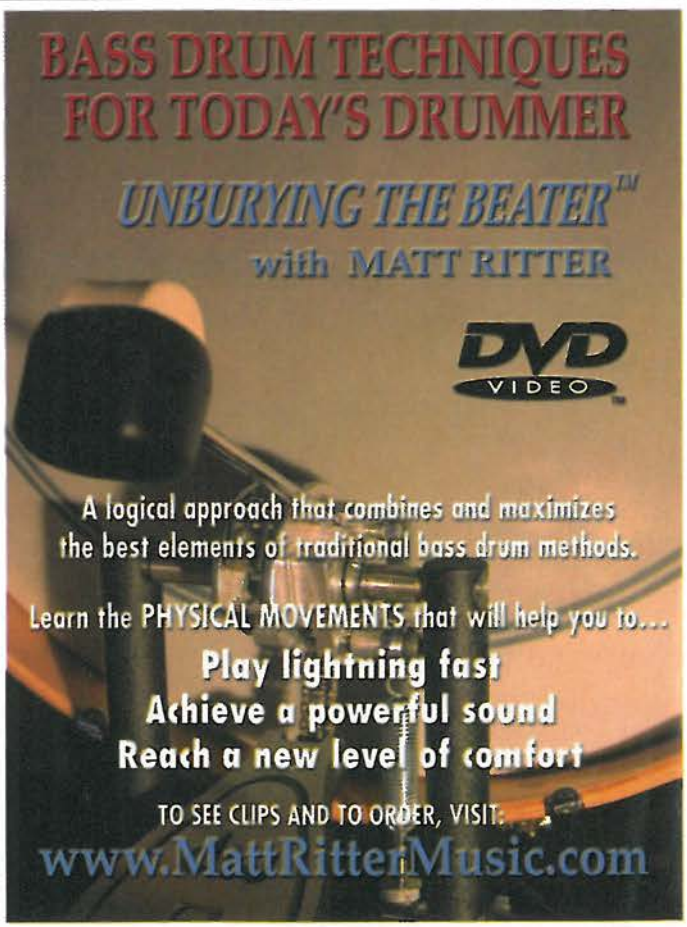
by Guy G. Gauthreaux II (Pioneer Percussion)

**level: all, $14.95** ♦♦♦½




Okay, you're not going to listen to this in your iPod while you're at the beach. But if you're a serious drummer, this is a good example of what your rudiments are supposed to sound like. Gauthreaux, timpanist with the US Navy Band in Washington, DC, plays all forty of the PAS International drum rudiments (which can be downloaded for free from www.pas.org), along with six snare drum solos he wrote, plus a bonus trio, "March Time" by David Eyler. Each rudiment is performed "open-close-open" and lasts 60 seconds—perfect to practice along with for that marching audition. The liner notes also provide practice tips. And his Gladstone drum sounds like a "real" snare, not like the tinny-sounding ones found on too many football fields in the 21st century. ([703] 321-8760) **Andrea Byrd**

## Drum Talk
## Drum Stories

by Bill Matthews (Fremont Drum)

**level: beginner to intermediate, $29.95 (DVD), $14.95 (CD)**

Bill Matthews has been teaching traditional hand drums for well over a decade, and he's solidified his teaching experience in a series of titles released in book, CD, and video/DVD formats. His first book, which focuses on rhythms from Africa and the African Diaspora, was recently revised and reissued as *The New Conga Joy*. These newer releases expand and refine his conga/ashiko instruction.

*Drum Talk* presents a series of traditional rhythms for two players. The DVD presents these rhythms in a simple, straightforward fashion. More helpful, however, is the first-person perspective created by aiming the camera over the player's shoulder and looking at the hands. The *Drum Stories* CD offers traditional and original rhythms, as well as some new ideas in conga drum rhythms. Without its accompanying book or video, the CD alone is somewhat lacking as an educational tool; get either of the visual aids to help learn the details. Overall, Matthews presents his material in an easy-to-learn way that should help aspiring hand drummers gain a fuller vocabulary. (congajoy.com)

**Martin Patmos**

## Tabla: East To West

by Harjit Singh & Alex Mott (Jas Publications)

**level: beginner, around $18**

Since the art of playing tabla is traditionally taught by a guru, finding a teacher isn't always an easy thing. Nor is learning to play the actual drums, with their various finger and hand strokes—not to mention the Indian rhythmic system. Because of these issues, a book like this is quite welcome, especially as it is so well done. *Tabla: East To West* begins with notation explanations, finding a middle ground for Western and Indian methods. It goes on to discuss six of the ten boles, or types of notes, that can be produced on the drums, which are effectively photographed and described. Some basic tal (time/rhythm) exercises are then given, putting the strokes together. Other sections in the book discuss the physical makeup of the drums, tuning, and practice. With a DVD in the works and two additional volumes scheduled for the future, this beginner tabla book looks to be the start of an excellent methodology. (www.jas-musicals.com)

**Martin Patmos**

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## Keep Swinging!
### Approach Your Senior Years Without Skipping A Beat

by Sam Ulano (Vital Health Nutrition)

**level: all, $15.95**

If founding father Thomas Paine were alive, he might applaud Sam Ulano's common-sense, get-the-job-done approach to life and the book it spawned. Ulano's latest tome has little to do with technique and avoids hurling hokey drumworld-related mantras at you. Instead, bite-sized chapters collectively focus on improving your physical health, mental well-being, and ability to make sound decisions in your daily life. Ulano muses/writes first and foremost from the perspective of a mature, experienced human being—his drumming and educational credentials are a distant second. As a result, Ulano may come off a bit preachy, but that's because he knows how easily we all can fall prey to lazy-ass syndrome. Besides, after eighty-four years on Earth, the author has earned the right to say and do whatever he wants. While specifically targeted at seniors, this easy-to-digest motivation tool should succeed in helping people of all ages tackle life's obstacles, small and large. (www.vitalhealthbooks.com)

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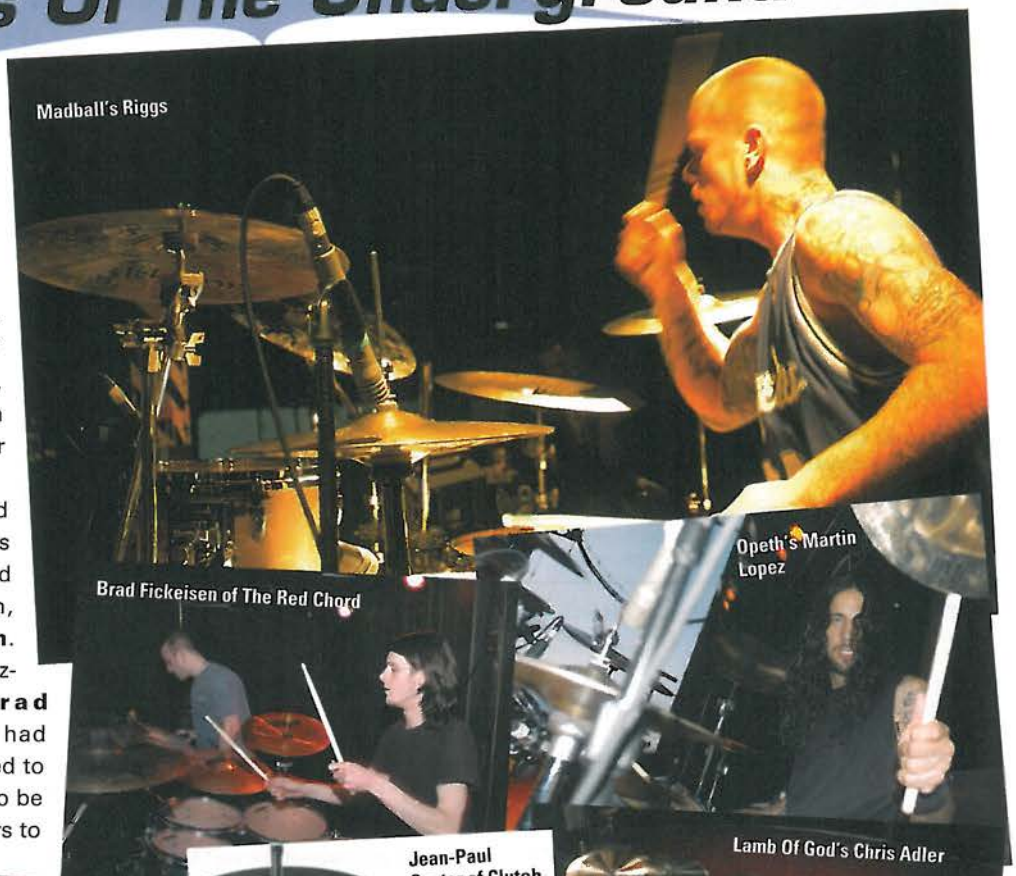
# Sounds Of The Underground

Extreme beats were in abundance when the Sounds Of The Underground tour descended upon the Starland Ballroom parking lot in Sayreville, New Jersey this past July 2. Things heated up early as New York's Madball unleashed brutal mosh-core. "There's a lot of hard hitters and great technical guys here," commented the group's drummer, **Riggs**. Then came the mammoth grooves of High On Fire, with drummer **Des Kensel** in terrific form.

A highlight of the day was a crazed performance by mad-metal scientists Strapping Young Lad. Many eyes and ears were fixed on the gargantuan, warp-speed chops of **Gene Hoglan**. "Playing with people like Gene is amazing," commented drummer **Brad Fickeisen** of The Red Chord, who had stunned the crowd earlier. "I've listened to him since I was fourteen. I'm grateful to be on this tour, and I hope it lasts for years to come."

Later, the insanely theatrical Gwar stormed through a set of thrashy classics. Performing in the stifling heat while wearing outlandish costumes couldn't have been easy, but Gwar drummer **Jizmak Da Gusha** (a.k.a. **Brad Roberts**) still brandished precise rhythms, speedy fills, and nimble cymbal work. "I play what I like to hear," said Brad, "and I catch the groove. I throw in fills when they're called for, but my main job is timekeeping."

More exceptional skin-pounding was supplied by Opeth's **Martin Lopez** and Chimaira's **Kevin Talley**, who gushed: "This tour has the sickest and most brutal drummers ever!" Speaking of brutal, Unearth offered menacing thrash/death metal that featured **Mike Justain**'s whirlwind drums. Also exceptional were From Autumn To Ashes' **Francis Mark**, Every Time I Die's **Michael "Ratboy" Novak**, Poison The Well's **Chris Hornbrook**, Throwdown's **Ben Dussault**, and Norma Jean's **Daniel Davison**.

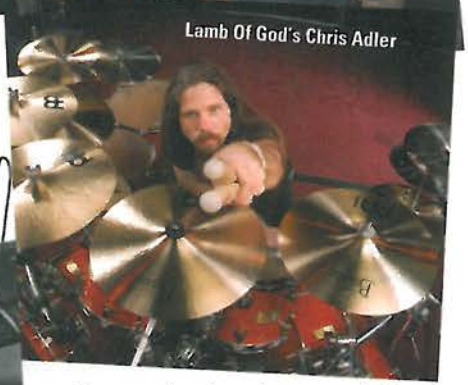

Madball's Riggs


Opeth's Martin Lopez


Brad Fickeisen of The Red Chord

Gwar's ferocious Brad Roberts

Jean-Paul Gaster of Clutch

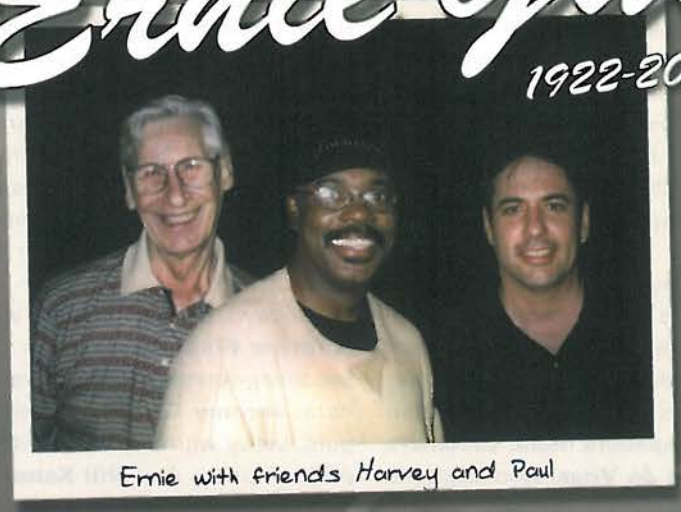

Lamb Of God's Chris Adler

Eventually the place needed some cooling down. Luckily, Clutch—with their rootsy, soulful metal—was up. "When we go on," said drummer **Jean-Paul Gaster**, "it feels like someone's turned on the air conditioner." Gaster still threw down heaps of power, style, and passion.

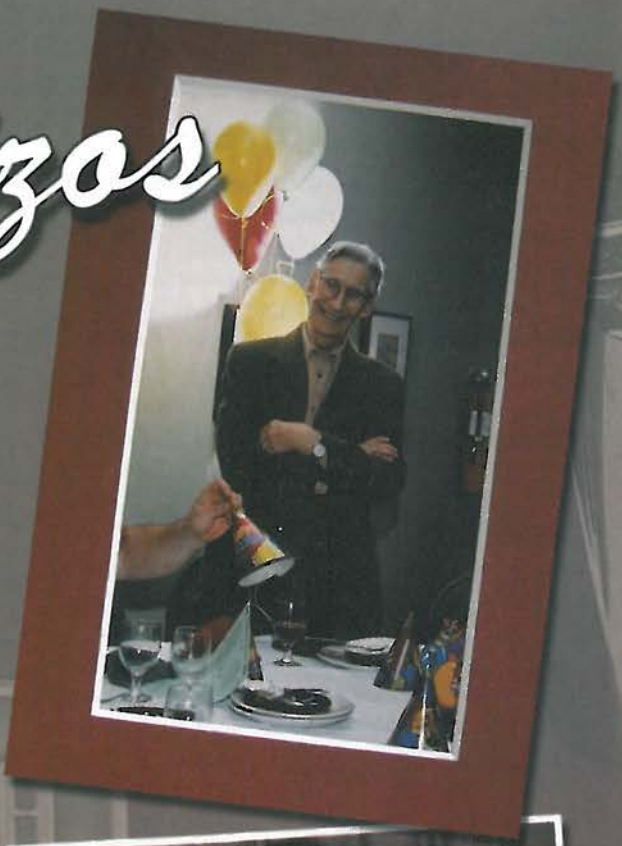
The event ended with a blistering performance by metal sensation Lamb Of God. "We've been crossing paths with many of these bands for ten years now," said drummer **Chris Adler**. "So to get everybody together is great. And it's cool to discuss new gear or a new trick someone's learned. It seems like only drummers share that kind of information." Speaking of information, for more on the SOTU tour, go to www.soundsoftheundergroundtour.com. **Jeff Perlah**

# Salute to Ernie Gadzos

1922-2005



Ernie with friends Harvey and Paul



Long time friend and Gretsch employee, Ernie Gadzos passed away on June 30 in his hometown of Savannah, GA.

Ernie was a gentle man who dedicated his entire life to the music business. He began playing drums when he was 18 years old and he played and traveled with several of the "Big Bands" including the Glenn Miller Orchestra and the Vaughn Monroe Orchestra.

When Ernie retired from 30 years of traveling with orchestras, he went to work for Maury Leshan at Franks' Drum Shop on Wabash Avenue in Chicago, just a few doors away from The Gretsch Company's Midwest office at the time. When Franks' Drum Shop closed, Ernie moved to Bill Crowden's Drum Shop in the same multi story building. From there, Ernie worked with the Slingerland Drum Company servicing dealers till Slingerland was sold to Gretsch in 1986. Ernie and his wife, Virginia moved to Savannah to join the Gretsch Music Company where he assisted drummers and dealers from around the world with selecting just the right Gretsch performance and recording drums for their specific needs.

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# In Memoriam

## Ivor Arbiter

British entrepreneur and inventor Ivor Arbiter died this past July 26. He was seventy-four.

In the late 1950s Arbiter opened the first "drums only" store in the UK, which he called Drum City. It became a Mecca for jazz drummers like Buddy Rich, Kenny Clare, and Phil Seamen. In 1962 an obscure drummer from Liverpool with the unlikely name of Ringo Starr came to Drum City to replace his well-used drumset with a new Ludwig kit in Black Oyster Pearl. And, according to legend, the Beatles' dropped-T logo was also created in Drum City, when Ivor drew it on the back of a cigarette packet.

By 1970 Arbiter was designing and building Hayman drums, which became highly popular in Europe. In 1976 he introduced Autotune—a drum-tensioning system with a counter-hoop that screwed onto the shell like the lid on a pickle jar. Arbiter re-introduced the Autotune concept on his AT drums, launched in 1997. These were followed in 1999 by Flats, which were shell-less portable drumkits that utilized the AT tensioning system.

# Australia's Ultimate Drummer's Weekend

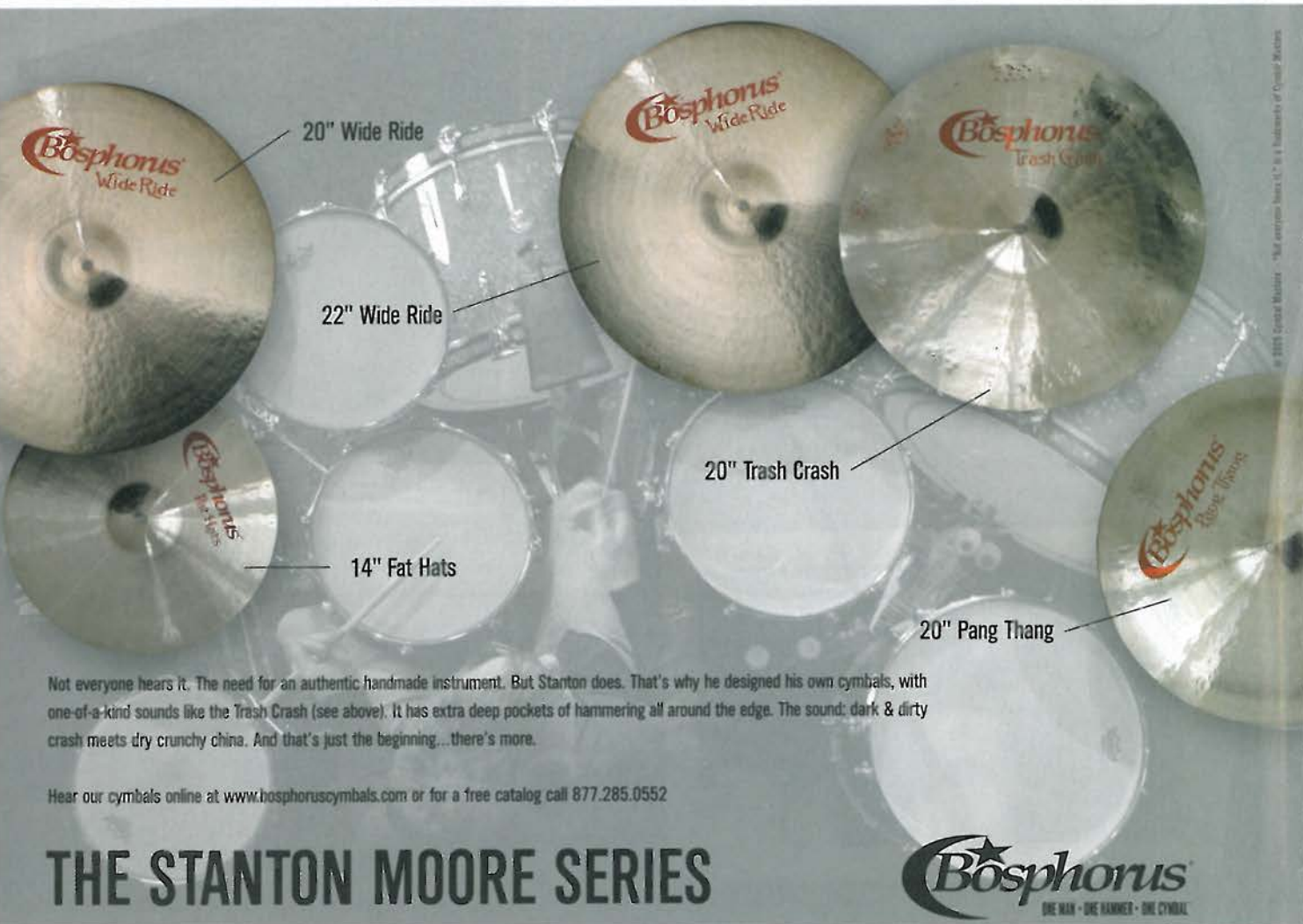
Australia's Ultimate Drummer's Weekend has become the largest event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, with live performances, workshops, and product exhibits. The 2005 show, held this past June 4–5, was the thirteenth AUDW, and it drew drumming fans from across the globe.

Saturday's concert kicked off with last year's winner of the Open section of the Up & Coming Drummer competition, **Damian Corniola**. He was followed by **The Drumbassadors** (**René Creemers** and **Wim de Vries**) who displayed their trademark warmth, humor, great arrangements, and consummate playing skill. **Johnny Rabb**'s performance was heavy on techno/hip-hop ideas, played with amazing dynamic and speed control.

Melbourne homeboy **Virgil Donati** returned from the US to show the audience just what makes him such a special player. His rhythmic ideas, speed, power, and control are simply awesome. Likewise, **Mike Mangini**'s unique approach to the momentous task of "learning to learn" has stamped him as one of the leaders in the fusion field.

Sunday's concert opened with **Andrew Fisenden**, who is fast becoming Australia's jazz player of note. **Jeremy Colson** combined punk frenzy with the musical discipline of fusion. And **Will Kennedy** demonstrated his inspirational approach to the drumset with some great soloing and fantastic groove playing.

**The Virgil Donati Band** (Tony MacAlpine on guitar, Rufus Philpot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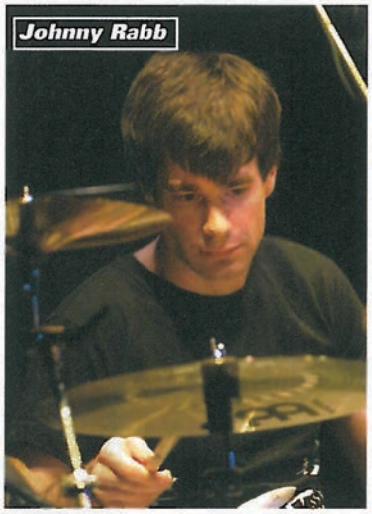
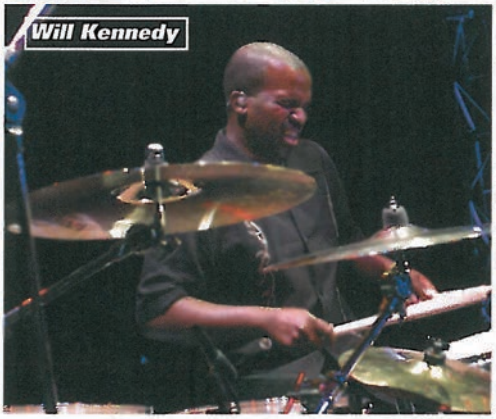
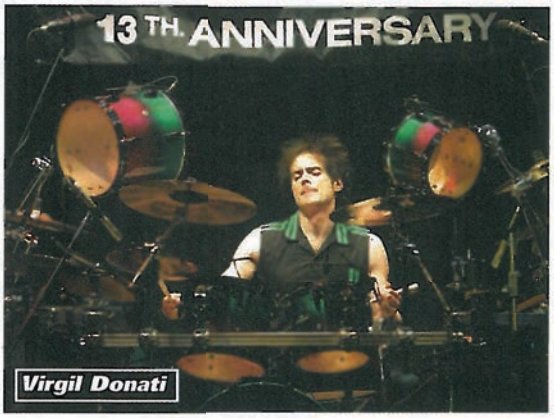
on bass, and Steve Weingart on keyboards) finished this year's festival with a superlative performance. Virgil's compositional style is rich and complex. Put that together with a take-no-prisoners approach to the playing, and you get one very exciting musical performance.

The AUDW Concert and Workshops were supported by Drum Workshop, Evans, Latin Percussion, *Drumscene*, Meinl, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Remo, Roland, Sabian, Sonor, Tama, Vater, and Zildjian. The concert was recorded for DVD release.

**Story by Paul Matcott**
**Photos by Harry Cassio and Rosanna Corniola**



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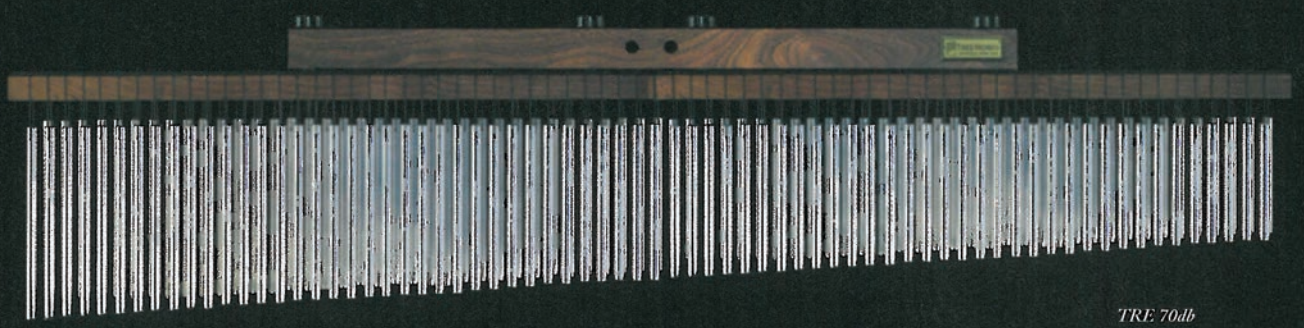


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# Percfest 2005

Percfest 2005 was held this past June 21-26 in Ligueglia, Italy. The fifteen-hour-per-day drum party brought teachers, students, players, and audience together in one of the most beautiful towns on the Mediterranean Riviera.

Created in memory of Italian percussionist Naco, Percfest has become one of the world's great drum festivals. Morning events include drumming & fitness sessions on the beach. In the afternoon, drum and percussion lessons are offered in local clubs, masterclasses are presented in open theaters and squares, and drum circles are held throughout the winding streets. Over 18,000 drum enthusiasts attended this year's events, which also included concerts in the evening and jam sessions late into the night.

Some of the best European jazz artists played on the evening concert stage, with the help of drummers such as France's popular **André Ceccarelli** and Rome's jazz king **Roberto Gatto**. The Psyco Drum Quintet fired up the audience, thanks to a lineup that included drummers **Enzo Zirilli** and **Stefano Bagnoli** plus vibes wizard **Andrea Dulbecco**.

The drum duo of **Roberto Gualdi** and **Stefano Bagnoli** gave a captivating masterclass. The paradoxical contrast between hard rocker Gualdi and brush specialist Bagnoli appealed to jazz and metal fans alike. Also popular was a six-lesson course on rock drumming led by Italy's fusion master, **Luca Capitani**.

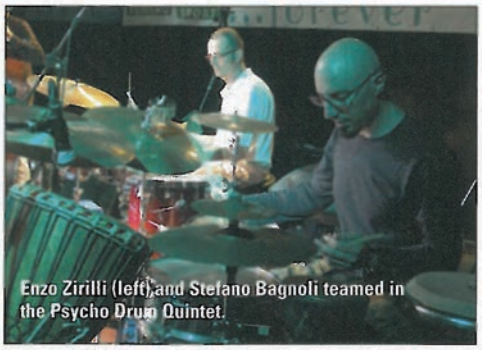
The closing night at Percfest was a collective drum show featuring Italian percussionists **Marco Fadda**, **Giorgio Palombino**, and **Dado Sezzi**, Brazilians **Gilson Silveira** and **Djalma Correa**, Cuban **Tony Meneses**, traditional Swiss marching snare band **I Tamburi di Bellinzona**, twelve-year-old jazz drummer **Andrea Mazzanti**, and **Ellade Bandini**, who is probably Italy's most popular drummer.

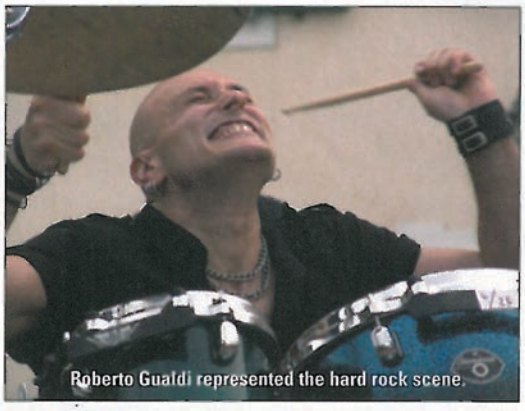
Percfest's tenth edition will be in June of 2006. Go to www.percfest.com for more information.

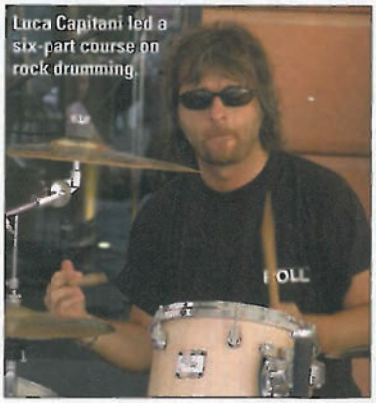
**Story and photos by Mario A. Riggio**

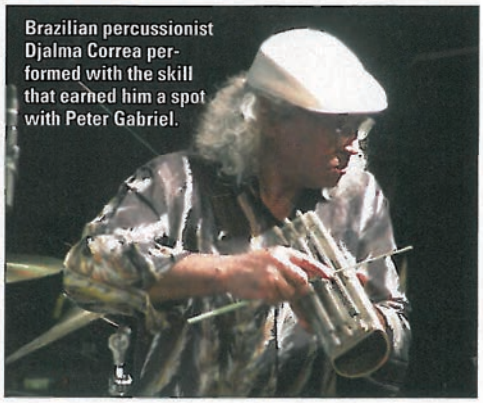
French jazz star André Ceccarelli gave classes and performances at Percfest.

Veteran session ace Ellade Bandini is one of Italy's most popular drummers.


Enzo Zirilli (left) and Stefano Bagnoli teamed in the Psycho Drum Quintet.


Roberto Gualdi represented the hard rock scene.


Luca Capitani led a six-part course on rock drumming.


Brazilian percussionist Djalma Correa performed with the skill that earned him a spot with Peter Gabriel.

Morning drumming and fitness sessions were held each day on Ligueglia's beautiful beach.

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# STANTON MOORE

## GRAND PRIZE WORTH

Photo by Dwight Marshall

### Grand Prize:

1. A GRETSCH CHAMPAGNE SPARKLE USA CUSTOM BE-BOP KIT: an 8 x 12 Tom, a 14 x 14 Floor Tom, a 16 x 18 Bass (with drum mount and matching inlay hoop) and a 5 x 14 snare. Set complete with DW HARDWARE, which includes: a 6500 hi-hat, a 6300 snare stand, four 6700 cymbal stands, a 9100M throne and a 9000 single pedal
2. BOSPHORUS CYMBALS: a 22" Wide Ride, a 20" Wide Ride, a 20" Trash Crash, a 20" Pang Thang, and a pair of 14" Fat Hats
3. REMO DRUMHEADS: two 12" Coated Ambassador, four 14" Coated Ambassador and two 18" Coated Powerstroke 3
4. A brick of STANTON MOORE SIGNATURE STICKS from VIC FIRTH
5. A copy of both of STANTON'S DVDs from CARL FISCHER MUSIC
6. A copy of STANTON'S BOOK from CARL FISCHER MUSIC

### 1st Prize:

1. BOSPHORUS CYMBALS: a 22" Wide Ride, a 20" Wide Ride, a 20" Trash Crash, a 20" Pang Thang, and a pair of 14" Fat Hats.
2. A brick of STANTON MOORE SIGNATURE STICKS
3. REMO COATED AMBASSADOR DRUMHEADS PRO PACK (1 each) 12", 13", 14" & 16"
4. A copy of both of STANTON'S DVDs
5. A copy of STANTON'S BOOK

### Stanton Moore
#### Playing the Music He Loves

Raised in New Orleans, Stanton is one of the hottest and most versatile young drummers on the scene today. Known for his personal style of Crescent City funk and groove, he is a founding member of ***Galactic*** and is involved in many side projects that can take him anywhere from Jazz to Funk to Metal. In addition to Galactic, he records and performs with groups as varied as ***Garage-a-Trois, The Preservation Hall Jazz Band*** and ***Corrosion of Conformity.*** With his new 2005 DVD releases ***A Traditional Approach to New Orleans Drumming*** and ***A Modern Approach to New Orleans Drumming*** as part of a series called ***Take It To The Street*** produced by Carl Fischer Music and upcoming book with CD, Stanton has entered the realm of being both a serious clinician as well as the leading steward of the New Orleans drumming tradition. Stanton is very particular about his sound and gear and is proud to endorse Bosphorus Stanton Moore series cymbals, Gretsch drums, DW hardware, Remo drumheads, and Stanton Moore Signature Sticks by Vic Firth.

### Consumer Disclosure & Entry Details

1. **To enter online,** visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Stanton Moore Contest button **or** send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, email address, and telephone number to: MD/Stanton Moore Contest, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.
2. Enter as often as you wish via postcard, but each entry must be mailed separately.
3. **Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received.**
4. **CONTEST BEGINS 10/1/05 AND ENDS 12/31/05. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 12/31/05 AND RECEIVED BY 1/5/06.**
5. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on January 12, 2006. Winner will be notified by phone on or about January 18, 2006.
6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Carl Fischer Music, Kaman Music Corp., Gretsch Drum Company, Bosphorus, Vic Firth, Inc., DW, Remo and their affiliates are ineligible.
7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries.
8. Contest open to residents of US and Canada who are 18 years of age or older. Void in Florida, Quebec, Canada, and where prohibited by law.
9. One prize awarded per household per contest.
10. **Grand Prize** – Gretsch Champagne Sparkle USA Custom Be-Bop Kit four-piece drumset that includes: 8 x 12 Tom, 14 x 14 Floor, 16 x 18 bass and 5 x 14 snare complete with DW Hardware: 6500 hi-hat, 6300 snare stand, 6700 cymbal stand (x 4), 9100M throne, 9000 single pedal. Bosphorus Cymbals: 22" Wide Ride, a 20" Trash Crash, a 20" Pang Thang and a pair of 14" Fat Hats. Remo Drumheads: 2-12" Coated Ambassador, 4-14" Coated Ambassador and 2-18" Coated Powerstroke 3. Vic Firth, Inc: a brick of Stanton Moore Signature Sticks. Carl Fischer Music: *Take It to the Street!, A Traditional Approach to New Orleans Drumming, A Modern Approach to New Orleans Drumming* and a copy of Stanton's book, *Take it to the Street!*
Approximate total retail value: $11,000.00.
**First Prize** – Bosphorus Cymbals: 22" Wide Ride, a 20" Wide Ride, a 20" Trash Crash, a 20" Pang Thang, and a pair of 14" Fat Hats. Remo Drumheads: Coated Ambassador Drumhead Pro Pack (1 each 12", 13", 14", & 15") Vic Firth, Inc: A brick of Stanton Moore Signature Sticks. Carl Fischer Music: A copy of both of Stanton's DVDs. A copy of Stanton's book.
Approximate total retail value: $3000.00
**Second Prize** – Remo Drumheads: Coated Ambassador Drumhead Pro Pack (1 each 12", 13", 14", & 15".) Vic Firth, Inc: A brick of Stanton Moore Signature Sticks. Carl Fischer Music: A copy of both of Stanton's DVDs. A copy of Stanton's book.
Approximate total retail value: $300.00
**Third Prize** – (three winners): Vic Firth, Inc: One pair of Stanton Moore Signature Sticks. Carl Fischer Music: A copy of Stanton's book.
Approximate total retail value for each winner: $35
Total sweepstakes value: $14,335
11. Sponsored by: Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove,NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140.
12. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Stanton Moore/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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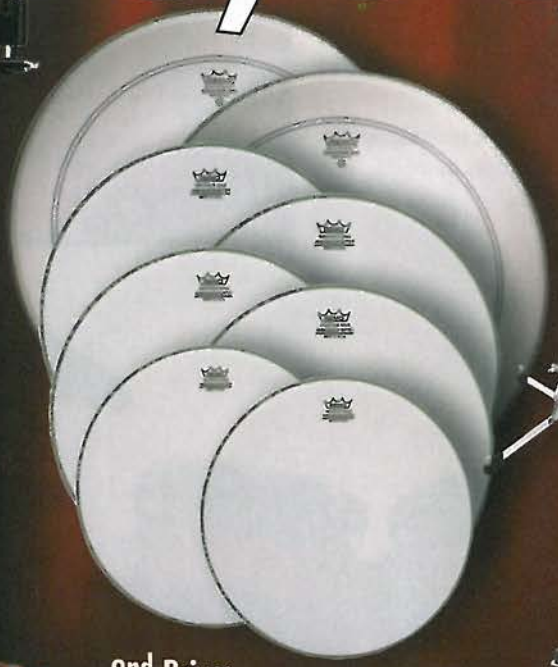

**2nd Prize:**

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3. A copy of both of STANTON'S DVDs
4. A copy of STANTON'S BOOK

**3rd Prize:**
**(three 3rd place names will be drawn):**

1. One pair of STANTON MOORE SIGNATURE STICKS
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Sixty-one-year-old Warren Floy of Newcastle, California describes himself as "a first-year drum student for the past three years." He's also a member of West Coast Willys, a club that celebrates the history of the original Willys "Jeep." Warren built this Jeep-faced drumkit especially for the club.

The PDP EZ drumset features red pinstriping tape over its black finish so as to coordinate with the look of the 1950 Willys grille that fronts the kit. (Even the black cowbell is pinstriped in red.) The plywood and pine riser is custom-painted in the same red-and-black motif, and it's trimmed with chrome tape.

"The grille gives the bass drum a chrome-enhanced, bifurcated sound-splay with compartmentalized slap-back," says Warren (with tongue firmly in cheek). "And the headlights are handy for spotlighting cocktail waitresses."

**PHOTO REQUIREMENTS**

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution 300 dpi digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.
Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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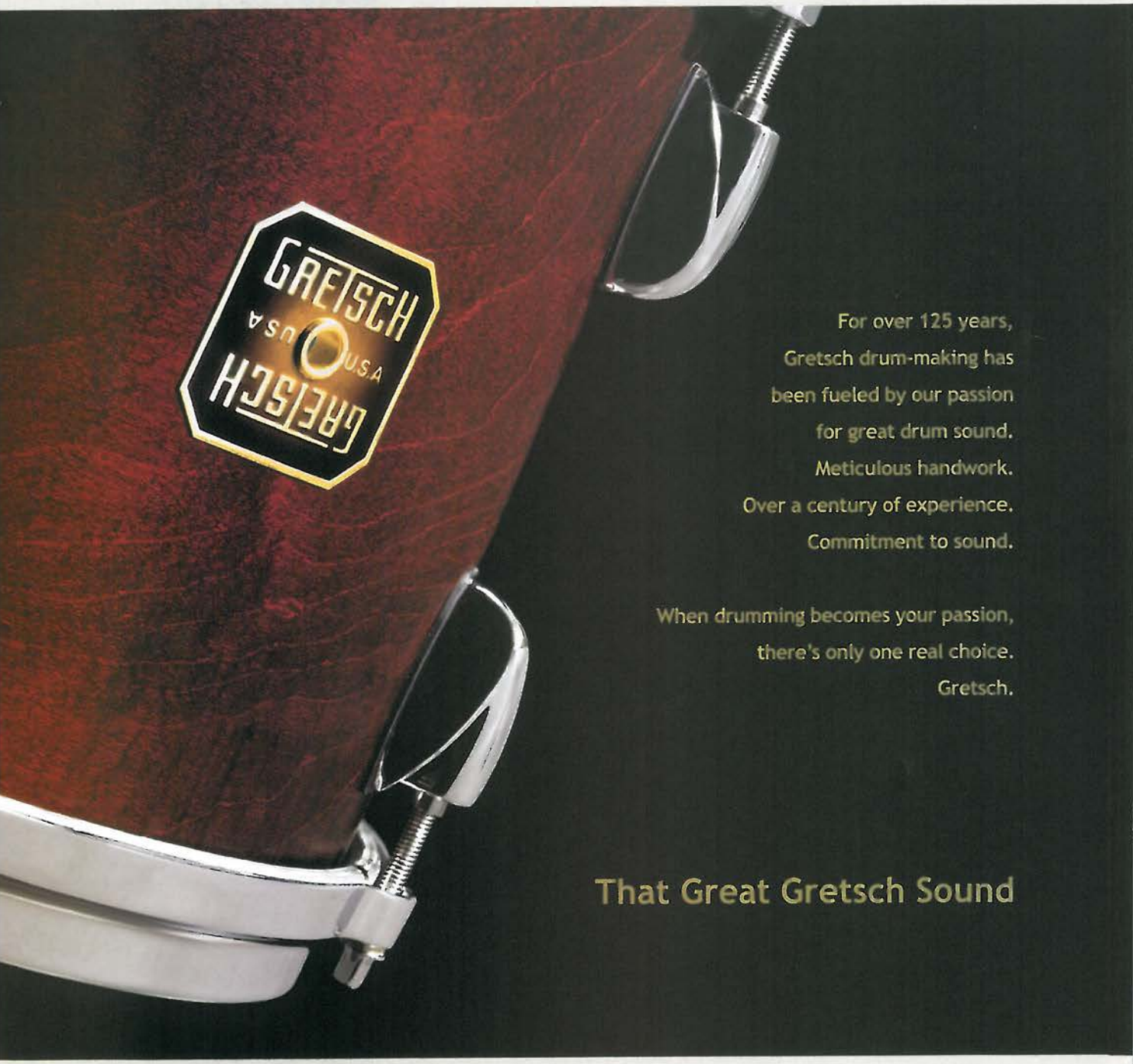


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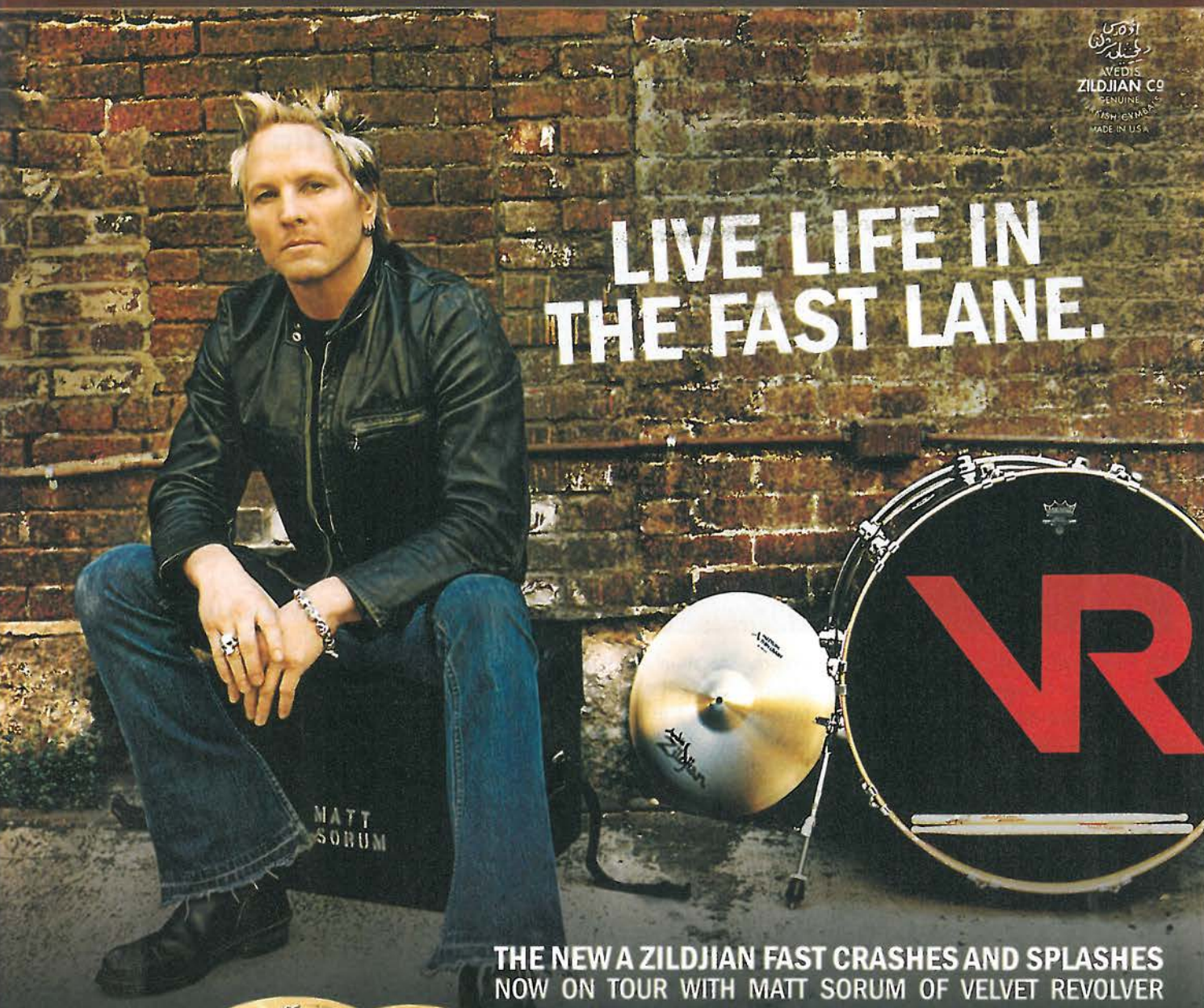


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